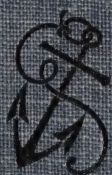
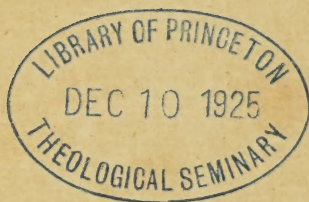


THE
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TO-DAY



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THE APPEAL OF THE BIBLE
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“There are certain possessions of ours, certain heirlooms,
that we must accept from the past, or perish.”

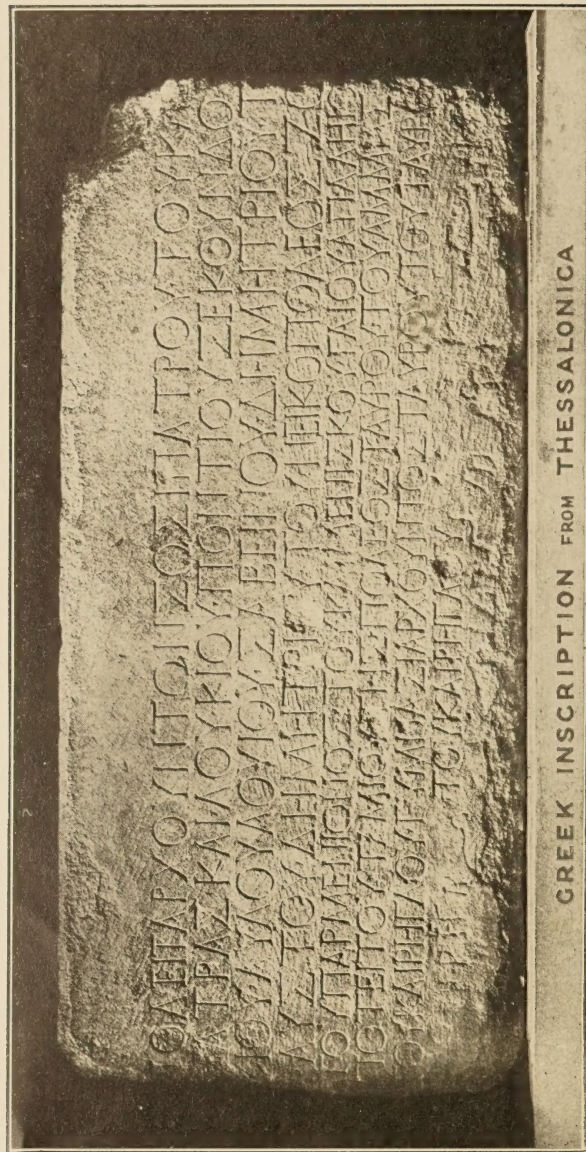
ALFRED NOYES.

“Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been
so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many
truths as yet undiscovered.”

BISHOP BUTLER.



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The first word in this inscription strikingly supports St. Luke's trustworthiness as a historian. It shows that, at a point at which he has been charged with inaccuracy, he was using a local term correctly. (See page 106.)

THE APPEAL OF THE BIBLE TO-DAY

BY
THISELTON MARK, D.LIT., B.Sc.

(HONORARY LECTURER IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER)
EDITOR OF "THE BIBLE FOR CHILDREN" AND
THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S BIBLE; AUTHOR OF
"STUDIES IN RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE,"
ETC.

"And the Voice went forth throughout the world . . .
and each one heard it according to his capacity."

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS, LTD.
LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT
THE PRESS OF THE PUBLISHERS

TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND DR. CHARLES GORE
(LATE BISHOP OF OXFORD)

WHOSE FORECAST OF THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO
IS FINDING INCREASING FULFILMENT
THAT

“it was with the more conservative among the
recent critics, and not with the more extreme,
that the victory would lie.’

FOREWORD

By THE DEAN OF MANCHESTER

(Late Editor of *The Interpreter*)

I HAVE read this book with great appreciation. It is clear and concise, and yet clothed ; it is no mere skeleton, though its range is so wide. It is just such a measured, succinct statement, luminous and picturesque withal, as we have long needed. It is precisely the kind of book I have often craved for, when asked by intelligent laymen what literature I could recommend on the subject. It does not assume too much.

The section on the group at Rome is suggestive. There is hypothesis about it—but many facts are converging to show that it is a happy hypothesis : I fancy we are destined to hear more about it.

As I have already said in an anticipatory editorial Note in *The Interpreter*, after twice reading the greater part of the manuscript, it is long since I have seen so useful a book on the Bible written from the modern point of view to place in the hands of the average educated man. Its author brings a fine range of reading and a singular capacity for discrimination, coupled with powers of clear presentation and pleasant diction, to the completion of his task.

HEWLETT JOHNSON.

PRINCIPAL SELBIE, of Mansfield College, Oxford, writes :
“You have written an exceedingly useful and timely book. It seems to me to combine criticism with construction in just the right proportions, and it should be a very real help in the many perplexities which people are feeling just now. I hope it will have a large circulation.”

P R E F A C E

THE purpose of this little book is twofold. First, to show how largely the Bible speaks for itself, and on all the larger issues is its own interpreter ; secondly, to show how well the Bible bears the fullest and clearest light that can be thrown upon it. New interpretations do not do away with the old values.

The book is a sequel to lectures given for several years to University students of education and others, and to University Extension audiences. A section on the "Progressiveness of the Law" appeared in *The Interpreter* for April 1924.

The treatment is entirely popular. Yet, so far as the limitations of space permit, no difficulty is consciously shelved. The writer's aim is to present with entire frankness, and in purely untechnical language, the appeal of the Bible to the general reader to-day. Opinion is shown in the making, rather than recorded as made. A few points of detailed scholarship are dealt with in the notes, in the hope that for some readers what is written may serve as finger-posts, pointing the way of further study. In this way much important material is carried forward into note and appendix. The chronologies are made to serve to some extent the purposes of an Index ; the Topical Index at the end being correspondingly shorter.

The author expresses sincere acknowledgments to the Dean of Manchester, Dr. Hewlett Johnson, by whose suggestions (based on a commanding knowledge of the literature of the subject, after editing for twenty years a theological quarterly) he has been greatly helped ; to Principal Selbie, for kindly reading the proofs, and for the hospitality of Mansfield

College and Library during a period of special study at Oxford ; to Professor Peake and Dr. Grieve for valued suggestions ; and to Dr. Rendel Harris of Rylands Library, as well as to heads of departments in the University of Manchester and in associated theological Colleges, for expert opinion on points of detail. To correspondence with Professor Burkitt and to the great helpfulness of his studies of the earliest Gospel sources, as also to holiday conversations with Professor Duff, the writer is under obligation.

THISSELTON MARK.

THE UNIVERSITY,
MANCHESTER,
April, 1925.

CONTENTS

I. THE PLACE OF THE BIBLE IN THE THOUGHT OF TO-DAY: INTRODUCTORY	1
The Bible, unmoved by the growth of knowledge, gaining by research—The Bible, the friend of man's advance.	
II. A PROGRESSIVE LITERATURE	9
Sundry illustrations—The progressiveness of the Law : Early Hebrew Law ; the Deuteronomic Law ; the Levitical Law ; Progress of moral ideas between the Testaments ; New Testament Law—Progress- iveness and permanence.	
III. A LITERATURE LARGELY SELF-INTERPRETING .	27
The Bible its own Interpreter—Books of Job ; Jonah ; Daniel—Summary of results.	
IV. THE HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: THE HISTORY BOOKS AND THE PROPHETS	40
The hard core of actual history—Periods of Old Testament history—Key-words of Old Testament interpretation—The prophets as historians.	
V. THE HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: THE GOSPELS (I)	62
Old and New Testaments compared—The confirma- tion of the Text—General view of the first three Gospels.	

VI. THE HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: THE GOSPELS (2) . . .	73
General trustworthiness of the Gospels—Historical value of St. Mark—Recorded sayings of Jesus— Difficulties remaining—Felt need for literary foun- dations—The fourth Gospel—The portraitures of Christ—The records of miracles.	
VII. THE HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: THE ACTS (WITH ST. LUKE) .	100
Missionary Labours and Travels of St. Paul—Early struggles and successes of the Church—The date of the Acts—Illustrations from St. Luke—Brief sum- mary of results.	
VIII. THE HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: THE EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL .	121
Authenticity of the Epistles—St. Paul.	
APPENDIX A. SOME LEADING DATES OF OLD TESTAMENT LITERATURE AND HISTORY .	127
APPENDIX B. TENTATIVE CHRONOLOGICAL OUT- LINE OF NEW TESTAMENT LITERATURE AND HISTORY	132
APPENDIX C. NOTE ON THE WORDS OF CHRIST	136
APPENDIX D. ON THE ABRUPT ENDING OF THE "ACTS".	139
NOTES AND REFERENCES	147
A BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY	159
SHORT TOPICAL INDEX	161

“These prophecies have a word of God, as for all times, so especially for our own. Often it has been hard for me to refrain from expressly pointing out the agreement between Then and To-day.”

J. J. P. VALETON.

“Written in the East, these characters live for ever in the West ; written in one province, they pervade the world ; penned in rude times, they are prized more and more as civilisation advances.”

CHARLES READE.

“In the Bible there is more that *finds* me than I have experienced in all other books put together.”

S. T. COLERIDGE.¹

THE APPEAL OF THE BIBLE TO-DAY

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTORY

The Place of the Bible in the Thought of To-day

“ We think of the Bible as a book that *was* inspired. But the wonder of the Bible is that it *is* inspired. From the far-distant heights of time it comes sweeping into the hearts of men to-day.”

CANON DYSON HAGUE (of Toronto).²

“ The whole hope of human progress is suspended on the ever-growing influence of the Bible.”

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.³

I. FOR the many who know that new light has been thrown upon the Bible by recent scholarship, but do not as yet know how reverent is the scholarship or how helpful is the new light in the reading and teaching of Scripture, this little book is written.

This is not to say that Biblical criticism has not at times been so severe as to appear well-nigh destructive. But to-day criticism is realising more nearly than ever before Matthew Arnold's ideal: “ Its business is simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and, by in its turn making this known, to create a current of fresh and true ideas.”⁴ This in itself explains the widespread readiness to give the new light welcome.

The Bible has been aptly compared to one of our great English cathedrals, and historical criticism to the architect

who, "without disturbing a single stone, examines the pile and discovers the various styles of art and the various periods of time that it represents. . . . The cathedral is one, and the various parts blend. . . . Yet the sharply differing styles inform us as plainly as by a handwriting on the wall concerning the different periods at which its several parts were built." ⁵ To those who feel that in accepting this help they are wrenching themselves away from their old moorings, and who are tempted to ask, "What then is left?" there is but one answer: "We possess the same Bible word for word; the same Bible with the difficulties, many of which we have been quietly slurring over, or timorously skipping, now not skipped or slurred over, but included and in many instances explained."

By realising the setting of the various books of the Bible in the past, and taking them in their primary significance, we are at the same time bringing them into touch with the present and discovering their abiding significance. All we need to do is to let the Bible stand clear; to come to it with minds free from foregone conclusions, and to let it shine by its own light.

II. Much has been written regarding the conflict of science and religion, science and the Bible. The net result, especially in view of the modern reading of the Bible, is to show how wide of the mark is the idea of there being any conflict at all. For whilst science is ever more and more fully revealing the wonder of the universe, wonder is itself the mainspring of religion. When we read of suns being discovered, from which the light rays which now fall upon the telescope have been five thousand years on the way, though travelling at the flashing speed of eleven million miles a minute, the vastness of the universe moves the mind to awe. And if, in describing this vastness of space, we have to multiply millions by millions, we have, on the other hand, to divide the atom, which a few years ago was accounted indivisible, by millions of millions before

we reach the smallest thing at present known. In this marvellous way we arrive at units of energy or matter or electricity—the ultimate *something* out of which, physically speaking, everything is made.⁶ Yet the Bible, rightly read, is nowhere put out of countenance by the most modern thought in these and other directions. More truly it might be said that by maintaining man's power to wonder, the deep reservoir of his assimilating power, the Bible holds open the way for the growth of knowledge. The first condition of continuing progress is that we shall wonder as well as learn. And for this the whole spirit of the Bible as a literature stands. It is one of its chief functions, to keep alive the flame that feeds the flame.

Intellect alone, as the decay of civilisations shows, burns itself out. Materialism swamps the very being who vaunts himself upon material progress. Let us recall this truth that where inspirations fail the mind wearies in its quest : let us read the story which exploration is unfolding of “buried civilisations” ; and then ask, What is to prevent our own civilisation from being buried too ? And there is but one answer : *Keep my commandments and live. . . . Wisdom is the principal thing. . . . Exalt her, and she shall promote thee. . . . She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her.* This is the message of psalm and proverb and prophecy. It is the meaning of the whole Life and Ministry of Him who said : “ I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

The Bible is the friend of man's advance. Progress and discovery do not becloud with any uncertainty our reading of its pages. Supposing, though it is well-nigh inconceivable, some one in his laboratory at last succeeds in preparing the conditions under which dead matter becomes living ! This will no more dispel man's wonder, or disprove God, than did the discovery that the earth moves round the sun, or that the atom is divisible. Science is neither wonder-dispelling, nor is it atheistic. By tracking out the paths of the Universal Energy in building up the ordered

universe, it no more undoes the spiritual marvel than to see an artist at work upon his canvas detracts from the wonder of his masterpieces. Nature alters not with the progress of research and man's new discoveries of her laws. Nor does the Bible move from its place with the movements of our knowledge.

III. It is by its possession of one essential quality that the Bible holds its place unmoved in the presence of the movements of modern thought. It has *elasticity*. Because, speaking in a general way, it keeps to its own high themes, the Bible has the capacity of adapting itself to man's ever-varying point of view.

(a) So far as the details of science are concerned, the Bible stands aloof. Supposing, for instance, the first chapter in Genesis had, by some miracle, addressed its earliest readers in the language of the theory of evolution. It would not have lived two generations. For critical purposes, the contents of that chapter have no more to do with science than a resplendent sunset has to do with the electric lighting of our streets. De Quincey even argued that, if the Bible had taught man any of the arts or sciences, "capital doubts" would have arisen in our minds regarding its authority.⁷ It would have been abandoning a Divine mission for a human; and would have "intercepted" problems, the solution of which is for man's intellectual benefit. Moreover, may it not be asked, what science should we expect the Bible to teach? The science of the nineteenth century, or of the twentieth, or of a thousand years hence?

(b) Historical research and study of languages, so far from unsettling, have tended to establish the place of the Bible in modern thought. Invaluable aid in the understanding of its contents has come to us through the remarkable progress in our knowledge of Bible lands and Eastern languages within the last hundred years. Dead languages, brought back to life, speak to us on matters of Bible lore. Buried civilisations have been given a voice, and throw

light on Bible story. The varied and romantic history of research during the last seventy or eighty years has given fresh impetus and fullness to the study of text and context ; of literary style and methods ; of purpose in writing ; of order of writing ; and of the actual character of the literature embodied in the various " books." The way has been thrown open, also, as never before, to the study of other religions and of their influence on Hebrew thought and belief ; to the study of ancient life and customs in the East generally, and in Palestine, Egypt, and Babylonia especially—all, from first to last, contributing their quota to the completeness and accuracy of our knowledge and understanding of the Bible.

(c) In matters of detail, emendations of text and translation distinguish, say, the Revised Version from the Authorised Version. As a sufficiently striking example, we may take Isaiah ix. 3, where the 1611 translation—" not increased the joy "—which brought a contradictory note into the passage, is changed by the Revisers to " increased to it the joy." The explanation is that (using the nearest equivalents in our alphabet) LO means " not," and L'O means " to it," and that the latter is the true reading.⁸

IV. In these differing ways the Bible is found to be capable of interpretation and re-interpretation. Indeed it illustrates convincingly the progressiveness which we shall see in the next chapter to be one of its characteristic features as a literature, that the Bible does not hesitate to criticise itself. There is criticism of the Old Testament in the Old Testament ; criticism of the Old Testament in the New ; criticism of the New Testament in the New Testament.

We find in the Old Testament many examples of revisions by later writers, and of the substituting of new views for old. One illustration may be given here. In Exodus xx. 24, not merely permission but instruction is given to carry on the great patriarchal tradition of altar-building. This

Exodus instruction is found in one of the earliest of the writings of which any extensive use can be traced in the Bible. But in Deuteronomy XII. 4-7 and 13-14, a later writing embodying later teaching, the practice is forbidden. An idolatrous use of heathen altars had evidently crept in under cover of the earlier command (verses 2 and 3). In future, altars were not to be built to Jehovah; there was to be one centre only for altar-worship.

New points of view in the New Testament, as compared with the Old, will be seen as we proceed.

The criticism of the New Testament within its own covers lies less on the surface. But it is practically certain that St. Mark's Gospel, though the first to be written, was little used, being for some time scarcely acknowledged as an official Gospel. *St. Matthew*, though largely based upon *St. Mark*, was used, rather than it, for reading in public worship. Probably it was felt that *St. Mark* did not do justice to the Ministry of Christ as a whole, in that it omitted so much of His teachings. Or, the preference may have arisen on more general grounds. A modern writer says: "Till our eyes become accustomed to the atmosphere, it is difficult to recognise the conventional Saviour, with the gentle unindividualised face, in the stormy and mysterious Personage portrayed by the second Gospel."⁹ [A point in favour of this portraiture, as will be shown later.] *St. Luke's* preface (i. 1-4), again, has been read by some as denoting a want of complete satisfaction with earlier narratives. And practically all agree that *St. John* was written as a supplementary Gospel, to make clear certain great essentials, which, though implied, were not made prominent in the first three Gospels.

V. Yet, neither when the Bible is read in the light of recent knowledge, nor when its text and literature are studied, nor by its self-criticism, is its message impaired or its influence weakened. "The doubtful matters are things immaterial, like the débris of the mine, while the precious ore gleams and sparkles in every boulder."¹⁰

VI. After having been almost eclipsed during the Middle Ages between mysticism, on one hand, and, on the other hand, a Church tradition which culminated in the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope, the Bible was again brought to light by the Reformation. "By degrees," as Westcott says, "men began to attribute to the Bible the same mechanical infallibility which the Romanists had claimed for the Church." But inspiration does not imply infallibility. It is gain, not loss, to give up this comparatively recent doctrine of the word-for-word infallibility of the Scriptures, in order to win back our hold upon the abiding reality of their Inspiration.

Of the Inspiration of the Scriptures there can be no question. Had not Israel's prophets proclaimed their visions, Israel's lawgivers their laws, and Israel's thinkers their thoughts, the world would have lost, outside of Christianity, its highest exemplars, the literature and art of the world their master-influence. Of the earliest of the writer-prophets of the Bible, Amos, it has been said that he was the pioneer of a process of evolution from which a new epoch of humanity dates: of the Book of Psalms—that it contains the whole music of the heart of man, swept by the hand of his Maker. "Sunrise and sunset, birth and death, promise and fulfilment—the whole drama of humanity" are here.¹¹ So long as the world owes its best life,* its highest thought, its noblest visions, its purest utterances, whether in language or music or art, to the Bible, there can be no doubt concerning its Inspiration. Turning expressly to the New Testament, we find in the few pages of *St. Matthew* what has been spoken of as the most influential book ever written; *St. Luke* has been described as the most beautiful. *St. Mark* is, for its size, the most picturesque and arresting piece of writing ever penned; *St. John* the most comforting and the most

* So Huxley—"For three centuries this book has been woven into the life of all that is best and noblest in English history."—*Critiques and Addresses*, page 51.

revealing. Is there any doubt that the Bible is inspired, when human story is transfigured by its teaching, human nature transformed by its touch? It is a book in which the Unseen is visioned from the plane of the seen; which casts the light of the Eternal upon the affairs of time; a book which moves men; and is "re-inspired" again and again wherever it is read.

The aim of the following chapters is very briefly to study the Bible from its own point of view, to the better understanding of which we are helped by the thought and knowledge of to-day: noting, incidentally in treatment but centrally in fact, the pre-eminence of the Bible as a world-literature and its sustained, if not indeed enriched, personal and devotional appeal.

CHAPTER II

A Progressive Literature

“ God shows all things in the slow victory of their ripening.”

DEAN FARRAR.¹²

THE Bible is something more than a single book. It is a collection of books of various dates ; a literature, or, as is often said, a library. We expect a single book to maintain the same point of view throughout. But a library, even of books on the same subject, naturally presents different points of view. When its writings cover, as in the case of the Old and New Testaments, some forty or fifty generations, and contain a story of promise and fulfilment, of emerging ideals and splendid realisations, progressiveness will naturally be one of its characteristics.

The very groundwork of the Old Testament revelation is in a nation's history, and in individual experience as part of that history. The unity of the Bible, therefore, is a historical unity ; a unity of growth, of progress. “ It is the unity of a definite journey towards a definite goal in which the lower stages are gradually left behind.”¹³

We are now to note some of the signs of progressive development in this variously-dated literature. Owing to its longer span and its close connection with a nation's history over some twelve hundred years, the bulk of our illustrations will naturally be drawn from the Old Testament ; or from Old and New taken together.

I. Few will find any difficulty in seeing that the Eden

story, which centres wholly in the earth and man, is simpler in its picturing and in its whole conception than the Creation poem of Genesis I., which is written from the point of view of the cosmos—the creation of the heaven and the earth. The story in which God makes man, and plants a garden and places man in it, with certain commandments concerning the trees—sublime as it is in its very simplicity, inspiring poet and painter and preacher, and “awing us with a sense of the Divine”—is evidently on a more primitive plane than the series of visions which make up the Creation poem: light, evening and morning—the first day; the uplifting of the firmament; the seas rolling aside that grass and trees may grow; the sun and moon to rule the day and night; and so on, up to man created in the image of God. The writer of this poem makes no attempt to agree in detail with the earlier-written story which in our Bible immediately follows. The harmony of the two is a harmony of spirit; of teaching; of subduing, quickening wonder. Different names are used for God; yet, when we lift our eyes from either page it is one and the same God about Whom we have read.

II. When we turn to the Bible story of the Flood, the same facts appear, unity of impression upon the mind in spite of disunity in detail. And the want of harmony in detail is found on examination to be due to the presence of earlier and later versions of the story which are woven together.

On the most casual reading, it is almost self-evident that we have here a blending of two stories. For in Genesis VI. 19 we read: “Of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark;” but in Genesis VII. 2, a few lines lower down: “Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee seven and seven, the male and his female.” These two verses cannot conceivably be parts of one and the same original story.* For the same reason,

* As in the case of the two Creation stories, some clue is given to the different sources in the Divine names that are used. Genesis VII. 2 is

it is impossible to arrive at any clear notion of the duration of the Flood by working from the numbers that are given. This is because there are really two sets of numbers—those of the earlier version being “ forty ” in Genesis VII. 12 and VIII. 6, and three “ sevens ” (two implied in VIII. 10, the third in VIII. 12), making a total duration of sixty-one days. All the other numbers belong to the later version, and are included within the three hundred and seventy-five days between the seventeenth day of the second month in the six hundredth year of Noah’s life (VII. 11) and the twenty-seventh day of the second month in the six hundred and first year of Noah’s life (VIII. 13, 14).

What remains upon our minds, however, is not the intellectual difficulty arising from two accounts being interwoven without being harmonised, nor even the moral questionings to which the ethical references (such as in VI. 6, 7, 13; VII. 21-23) give rise. The primitive setting and atmosphere of the story enable us to disregard the moral difficulties ; and on the other hand, its magnificence has been more than sufficient to lift most of us over the arithmetical stumbling-blocks and the discrepancies in detail. The abiding impression is of the deep and solemn interest of the story, crowned, as it is, by the appealing *finale* of the bow in the cloud, interpreted as a signal in the heavens of the promise—already Nature’s promise, if you will, but only so because Nature, too, is a revealer of the Divine,—“ While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” This higher note belongs to the later of the two blended versions. Thus the progressiveness of the literature is again illustrated even in

from a version of the story which uses the name Jehovah or “ The LORD.” (*Yahveh* is a more correct spelling than Jehovah ; but the latter, being more familiar, will be retained here. Genesis VI. 19 is from a later version using the name “ God ” (Hebrew, *Elohim*)).

The name *Elohim*, like the name *Jehovah*, is used in writings of different dates. In the present instances, the Elohist writing belongs to somewhere about the beginning of the fifth century before Christ.

the telling of the same story. And our being able to trace it sets us free from any obligation to think of the combined, or of either of the separate, versions as intended for exact history.

III. The story of Balaam will be spoken of again in the next chapter. As we have it, it, too, is the product of a twice-told tale, hailing from two sources—one Southern, one Northern—of different dates. The southern (or Jehovist) story, containing the incident of the ass speaking, makes Balaam's going an act of disobedience; the northern and later story (more consistently in the light of the narrative as a whole, and as offering a prelude to the actual prophecies put on Balaam's lips) tells of his being permitted, even bidden, to go, but under strict instructions to say only what he was inspired by God to say. The later version is less primitive than the earlier, though both have value.

IV. There is a further example of clashing expressions, regarding which also the difficulty is largely removed by allowing for differences of date, in the story of the numbering of the people by David towards the end of his reign. In 2 Samuel xxiv. 1 we read that "The anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them saying, Go, number Israel and Judah." In 1 Chronicles xxi. 1 we read, "And Satan (R.V. an adversary) stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel." Difference in the dates of writing again helps to explain the different wording, and the difference in the underlying thought. Substantially, the whole of *Samuel*, though like other books undergoing later editings, is believed to have been compiled before 700 B.C.; whereas the Book of Chronicles is dated from the early part of the third century before Christ.¹⁴ During these four or five hundred years, as the stories of Job and Jonah will further show us in the next chapter, great changes of view were taking place with regard to the Divine part in human experience. The apparent clashing between the quoted passages is an evidence of one such change of view, for which the inter-

vening centuries, with their rich literary output and their rapidly moving history, are more than sufficient to account. New theologies were far from being unknown in Israel. The *Chronicles* version of the incident marks the passing from an older theology, according to which Jehovah was the one unseen force behind all that happened within the nation's life (hence we read in 1 Samuel xvi., "An evil spirit from Jehovah troubled Saul"), to a newer view according to which not everything happens at Jehovah's behest.

V. Other examples of the progressive revelation of spiritual truth will be found as we proceed.

Of the progressiveness of prophecy, one writer says: "What an interval separates Samuel (1 Samuel xv. 26) or Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 40) from Jeremiah! The one executes official punishment, the other does not even announce it!"¹⁵ Another example is that of the advance in spirit between the references to Nineveh in the Books of *Nahum* and *Jonah*. In Nahum's prophecy (about 625 B.C.) is a fiery denunciation of Nineveh, a rushing anger, and exultation over her impending fall. In the story of Jonah, some three hundred years later, are appealing utterances of the compassion of Jehovah towards Nineveh. From the fury of "Jehovah of hosts" we pass to the pity of "Jehovah, the God of heaven."¹⁶

VI. In the New Testament, the fourth and latest of the Gospels gives a completer view of the nature and person of Christ. And a somewhat similar advance in thought is seen in St. Paul's Epistles. The epistles of his busy tours, like the earlier gospels, are naturally more practical and concrete in their references. But "the enforced leisure of a prison" added the fruits of quiet reflection to his writings. His conception of Christ has become more mature and clearly defined, when he writes from Rome the Epistles to the Colossians and to the Ephesians. Still, "the doctrine of the Person of Christ is fundamentally Pauline, and, when it shows advance, it is a simple development of what was implicit in the earlier Epistles."¹⁷

THE PROGRESSIVENESS OF THE LAW

The progressiveness of the Law is one of the most striking features, not only of the Old Testament, but of the Old Testament in relation to the New. It will serve as our last example in this chapter of the Bible as a progressive literature, or, as it is often expressed, a progressive revelation.

In tracing the history of the Jewish Law we are carried beyond the actual Hebrew writings to older and foreign sources. (Just as we should have been, had we sought a Chaldean parallel to the Creation poem, or to the story of the Flood. Earlier legends, bearing a distinct resemblance to the Biblical accounts, existed in Babylonia, the land whence the Hebrews first migrated and afterwards the land of the Captivity ; * and, though the Biblical renderings are vastly superior alike in their restraint and in their elevation of spirit, the rougher-hewn Babylonian originals may well be believed to be in part their groundwork ; a groundwork from which they rise in that wonderful blending of simplicity and sublimity which distinguishes the Old Testament throughout.)

Amongst the greatest of the discoveries of explorers and excavators in eastern lands is a law code of ancient Babylon going back to about 2000 B.C., the time of King Hammurabi. It was found as recently as the winter of 1901-02. This oldest code of laws at present known was engraved on a block of basaltic rock standing nearly eight feet high ; the block was in pieces when found, but was easily put together. On it is engraved a representation of Hammurabi receiving the laws from the Sun-God, " judge of heaven and earth " ; a detail of considerable interest in connection with the record of the receiving of the law by Moses on Mount Sinai. Hammurabi's law has not reached

* The Creation poem of Genesis i. 1 to ii. 3 and the later of the two Flood stories are taken from a law code (to be described later in the chapter) which dates from the Captivity.

us quite complete, but enough remains still legible on the stone on which it was graven four thousand years ago, to show it to have been a thorough-going attempt to legislate for a people who were largely pastoral and agricultural, but whose cities knew much of trading and of the arts of civilised life. It was studied as standard law in Assyria in the seventh century before Christ ; and it was a textbook in the law schools of Babylonia much later than this.

Early Hebrew Law

The portion of the Old Testament law to which Hammurabi's code is evidently in some way allied is that known as *The Book of the Covenant*, which includes Exodus xx. 22 to xxiii. 33. This also is a law code reflecting the conditions of pastoral and agricultural life ; with commandments bearing on the elements of morality and religion. Here—as in the later echo of it found in Deuteronomy xix. 21, where we read, “ Life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,” and in the still later repetition in Leviticus xxiv. 17-21—we find the famous law of retaliation. One or two quotations from the code of Hammurabi will suffice. “ If a man,” we read, “ has caused the loss of a freeman's eye, one shall cause his eye to be lost ” ; “ If he has shattered a freeman's limb, one shall shatter his limb ” ; “ If a man has made the tooth of a man that is his equal to fall out, one shall make his tooth fall out.”¹⁸ Seeing that Babylonia was the mother-country of the Hebrews, and that both Egypt and Palestine are known to have been under the influence of Babylonian civilisation fully two hundred years before the march from Sinai to Canaan,¹⁹ it is extremely likely that early Hebrew law was influenced by the Babylonian. Quite possibly the law of retaliation (as a law of *judicial* procedure and penalty—be it noted, *not* of personal revenge) was part of the law given by Moses. But, for us and from the standpoint of the relation of the Bible to the life of to-day, one important matter regarding

it is, that, owing to the progressive character of the law amongst the Jews, as amongst all civilised peoples, the inclusion of these old laws in early passages of the nation's literature does not give them infallibility. We are not bound by the law of retaliation, because "it is in the Bible." On the contrary, this was one portion of the written law which Christ distinctly annulled: "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you . . ."

In addition to *The Book of the Covenant*, a primitive decalogue found in Exodus xxxiv. 10-28, containing such commandments as "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk," may be mainly Mosaic. It has its setting in the second visit to Sinai, and ends with Jehovah's command: "Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel." And Moses "wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments."

Further, according to a moderate and acceptable view, a simple form of the ten commandments as we know them also possibly dates from Mosaic times. This possibly earliest purely ethical and religious decalogue may, it is suggested, have run somewhat as follows:—

1. Thou shalt have no other gods beside Me.
2. Thou shalt not make to thee any graven image.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day to hallow it.
5. Honour thy father and mother.
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's home.²⁰

This would give the ten commandments as we use them a Mosaic nucleus, additions being made gradually, until the form in which they stand in Exodus xx. 1-17 was

reached. It would also account, since the accretions around the original nucleus might be regarded as to some extent optional, for such differences as occur, not of any great moment, between this last-named version and that of still later date found in Deuteronomy v.

The Deuteronomic Law

Intervening between these early law codes and the final form of the " Law " in the Levitical or Priestly Code was a code of the latter part of the seventh century before Christ. Readers will recall the dramatic discovery in the Temple of a " book of the law " during Josiah's reign by Hilki'ah, the high priest (2 Kings xxii. and xxiii.). This was the law as we have it in the central chapters of Deuteronomy. It is not quite certain whether chapters v. to xxvi., or, perhaps, originally only chapters xii. to xxvi., were the law actually brought to light by Hilki'ah. But, even if they were not part of the original, chapters v. to xi. were very soon added ; and not much later the historical introduction contained in chapters i. to iv. Here we may safely take the whole of the central chapters together (v. to xxvi.). They form a noble appeal, in which entreaty blends with commandment. The whole is given under the name of Moses, Israel's first lawgiver, and is presented as an eloquent pleading from his lips. " Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever ! " (v. 29).

It is after four hundred years of the kingship that this repetition of the law is presented. The primitive code of *The Book of the Covenant* is humanised and extended. The Decalogue is repeated, with many new sanctions and pleadings. Reading the book even in the English translation, still more in the Hebrew, it is as though Moses were indeed speaking and the people were in audience. With great skill the writer carries the thought of the people back to those momentous days, when from Sinai the law had been

given, and their leader had shown them the foundations on which they were to build their life as a nation in their new land (XI. 31, 32).

This admirable tractate, the Book of Deuteronomy, is quite as much a manual of religion as a handbook of the law. And therein lies its power. It contains many laws with penalties attached, as do our modern statute books. But its aim is higher. Laws of behaviour and penalties for transgression are not the end. They are the means, and one part only of the means. The other part is Jehovah, and sincerity in His worship. The end is the perfect State, a Theocracy, a people whose King is Jehovah; Jehovah, Who had "brought them up out of the land of Egypt" and Who would fain be their deliverer still. "The State," says Hegel, "is the march of God in the world."²¹ That was the Deuteronomist ideal for Israel as a nation.

King Josiah himself read the words of the book which had been found, before "all the people, both great and small." There was an immediate religious revival. But the reformation proved to be but partial and temporary. The new book of the law "saved the religion." It "laid the foundations of Judaism in solid rock." It did not save from disaster the nation into whose life the cancer of idolatry had eaten.

The Levitical Law

That there were features of advance in the Deuteronomic Code as compared with the earlier and more primitive *Book of the Covenant* is readily seen.* But advance is not

* It is also clear that if we find conflicting commands, as in the case already quoted of Exodus xx. 24 (the law on altar-building) and Deuteronomy xii. 13, 14 (the Deuteronomic law of one Sanctuary), the conflict is due to altered conditions and an altered point of view. "When we regard these laws" (the reference is general, not to the instances just cited) "as given at different times in Israel's history, and as designed to meet very different conditions, our difficulty in recognising their inspiration largely disappears. Here criticism has proved to be a bulwark of faith."—Peake, *The Bible: Its Origin, Its Significance, and Its Abiding Worth*, page 189.

at first sight so clear when we come to the next and last of the great codes, the Levitical or Priestly Code, drawn up during the Exile and solemnly promulgated by Ezra. It is much more elaborate. And, in some respects, its insistence upon ceremonial may seem to be a falling back from the high spiritual standard of the prophets: "Bring no more vain oblations. . . . Cease to do evil: learn to do well" (Isaiah i. 11-20); "Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them. . . . Let judgment roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream" (Amos v. 21-24). But there are times when apparent retrograde is real progress. Earlier prophecy had failed to stay the decline and fall of both northern and southern kingdoms. And it was with true political and spiritual insight that the leaders of the exiled people wrought out this new code. To say the least, this last of the Old Testament codes contains invaluable laws of health, of decorum, and of social observance, and is marked by great thoroughness in detail. And, on the spiritual side, no small part of its significance lies in the fact that Ezekiel the prophet had breathed into the law a new life, and that Ezra and others delivered it to the people with the warm breath of prophecy still upon it.

Whilst, then, the merest glance at the Book of Leviticus shows a prevailingly ceremonial reference, there is very much more there than ceremonial law. For one thing, the Decalogue is scattered up and down within it; and finds a certain concentration in chapter xix. The spirit of the first commandment (notably in the constant repetition of the words, "I am the LORD," and "I am the LORD your God") animates the whole; and there are frequent references, recurring almost as a refrain, to the deliverance from the land of Egypt. In chapter xix. we find these equivalents of the second to sixth and eighth to tenth commandments: "Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods"; "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely"; "Ye shall keep My sabbaths"; "Ye shall fear every

man his mother and his father ” ; “ Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart ” (cf. St. Matthew v. 22 and 1 John iii. 15 ; and note, “ He that killeth any man shall surely be put to death,” Leviticus xxiv. 17) ; “ Ye shall not steal ” ; “ Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer. . . . Neither shall ye deal falsely, nor lie one to another ” ; “ Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself ” ;— which last is far more than the moral equivalent of the tenth commandment on coveting. Leviticus xx. 10, contains an equivalent of the seventh commandment, “ The adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death ” (cf. xix. 20–22). It is a moral code, therefore, without question. To many it comes as a real surprise to find in the midst of its official and ceremonial detail the golden rule : *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* ; the very words in which Christ summed up the second table of the Law.

So far, however, we have in the main a repetition of earlier law. What signs are there of progress ? Postponing details for a moment, there was, in the first place, a point of view from which the captivity spelt freedom. Cut off from the customary observances of their religion, the mind and spirit of the people played more freely about the realities of their faith and the life it stood for. Nor, as we have seen, were prophetic voices lacking. There was the prophet of Isaiah xl. to lv. And Ezekiel, who during the siege of Jerusalem had raised his voice in warning (Ezekiel i.–xxiv.), now speaks words of hope, picturing to the people their happy state when Jehovah shall restore them to their homeland. Ezekiel, it has been said, aimed to close all the gaps in the law of Deuteronomy whereby the old heathenism had crept in, and to create influences which would safeguard the future. This is a second note of progress. The life of the new days, according to Ezekiel’s vision of it, was to find its centre not in the palace but in the Temple. And the same is true of the new code. It was the programme less of a political than

of an "ecclesiastical State." On this account, much outward observance was enjoined; for, if this people (many of whom, especially of those who had been left behind in Palestine, were very ignorant) were to be "led into the way of holiness, that way must be very plain and the guide-posts many." ²² In the third place, the land of the Captivity itself had much to do with the shaping of a new law and a new life. "What Israel learned from Babylonia helped it towards larger and truer views of the practical duties of life, and a wider and juster conception of the world and of its own place in the world's future." ²³

Coming to details,—on the moral and social side, there are one or two clear signs of advance. In the Priestly Code alone appears the Law of Compensation as distinguished from the Law of Retaliation (Numbers v. 6-8). It alone directly forbids lying (Leviticus xix. 11, vi. 1-5); though, as in Exodus xxiii. 1 and 7, there had been anticipations of this direct commandment. It provides for the redemption of slaves (xxv. 47-55); and demands honour for the aged (xix. 32). It alone has land laws; e.g., "the land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is Mine" (Leviticus xxv. 23, 24). It alone has the remarkable regulations for the restoration of property (Leviticus xxv. 10, 13-15, 23-24, 25-28; and for the release of Israelitish slaves every fiftieth year (xxv. 10, 39-42).

In the matter of worship, the Exile left its mark upon the observance of the Sabbath. The Sabbath was strictly observed in Assyria and Babylonia. This may help to account for the fact that whilst *Deuteronomy* mentions the Sabbath but once (in the fourth commandment) references to it in *Leviticus* are frequent. It accounts also for the stricter Sabbath-keeping during and after the Exile. (See Nehemiah x. 31; and note the stern action against Sabbath-breakers related in Nehemiah xiii. 15-22). This observance of the Sabbath was of importance to the exiled Hebrews as a reminder of their own religion and

as affording opportunities for worship in accordance with it. "From the Exile came forth the Synagogue." ²⁴

Further, under the influence of the prophets, both the earlier prophets who had committed their prophecies to writing and those of the Exile, there "was gradually popularised in this remnant of Israel the notion of God's spirituality and omnipresence"; hence we find in the Priestly Code a "more transcendent idea of God." ²⁵ This by itself is "monumental in the history of religion as the first example of the influence of 'Scripture' upon a whole community." ²⁶

Finally, now that the nation was gone, and tribes and families were broken up, God must be the God of the individual life. This the prophets had taught before. "It was the work of the Exile out of their gold to make current coin." ²⁷

All these things were contributory to progress. Psalms I., XIX., and CXIX., written after the Exile, show the esteem in which the new law was held. ²⁸ And a practical proof lies in the fact, that it was the spirit and ministration of this law which kept alive the loyalty of those who, later, in an hour of peril threatening even the nation's continued existence as the people of Jehovah, raised Jehovah's standard, and against apparently overwhelming odds won their way not only to religious, but with it also to complete political, freedom.

These agreeing testimonies may be summed up in a sentence: "In a very real sense Israel in Babylonia began anew its spiritual life." ²⁹

Progress of Moral Ideas in the interval between Old and New Testaments

Even before we come to the New Testament, there is progress in thought and precept which does much to pave the way for the higher morality taught by Jesus, and by the New Testament writers as learnt from Him. Would it not be surprising, in the light of the growing revelation of

which we have been considering examples, if there were, as was once believed, four hundred years of silence between the close of the Old Testament and the Christian era? The improbability of such a silence is greatly increased, if as Canon Girdlestone says, "The prophets whose writings we possess are not one-tenth, probably not one-hundredth, of those who were raised up in Old Testament days as messengers and missionaries from God to Israel." ²⁹ The fact is, there was no such silence. Many of the books belonging to the Old Testament bear more recent dates than 400 B.C. Amongst them, of books to be referred to later, are the Books of Job, Jonah, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel. Many of the Proverbs were written and the whole collected during this period; and some (perhaps many) of the Psalms were written and all gathered together into the one Temple hymn-book or Psalter.

Outside of the Old Testament, moreover, there exists a large and important body of literature, belonging especially to the last two centuries before Christ. This literature consists of writings usually known as the "Apocalyptic." "They represent," says Professor Peake, "a very important development in the history of Judaism. An understanding of them is necessary if we are to reconstruct the religious conditions in which Christianity was born. Important Christian doctrines owe much in their form and even contents to this literature." ³⁰ The general reader is under great obligation to Archdeacon R. H. Charles for his volume in the *Home University Library*, entitled *Between the Old and New Testaments*. "A study of the literature that comes between the Old and New Testaments," he writes, "shows that there was a steady development in every department of religious thought in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era." This development he traces in the conception of the kingdom of God; in the doctrine of a future life; also, very strikingly, in the law of forgiveness. Concerning the last of these, "as time went on, the teaching of the nobler

spirits began to make itself felt, and so the faithful came to feel that there was something wrong in the vindictive spirit and in its joy over an enemy's misfortune." So we read "Love ye one another from the heart; and if a man sin against thee, cast forth the poison of hate and speak peaceably to him, and in thy soul hold not guile; and if he confess and repent, forgive him. . . . But if he be shameless and persist in his wrong-doing, even so forgive him from the heart, and leave to God the avenging." ³¹

New Testament Law

Progressiveness in moral and spiritual revelation is naturally very marked when we reach the New Testament. We find that some portions of the Law Christ annuls; other portions He amends: the "commandments" (St. Mark x. 19; St. Luke xviii. 20) He endorses, summing up their spirit in love of God and love of man (St. Matthew xxii. 35-40; St. Mark xii. 28-31). It is to this varying attitude of His that we are in the present chapter discovering the key.

Though there is often a close verbal agreement between commands and counsels given in the Old Testament and those of the New, the newer commandment comes with such added effect that it is often a surprise to find how nearly the same thing had been said before. Not only do we find in Leviticus the commandment which Christ endorses as the summary of the second table of the law; but the law of forgiveness is repeated with some frequency, especially in post-Exilic writings. "With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful"; "Say not thou, I will recompense evil"; "Say not, I will do to him as he hath done to me"; "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head" (Psalm xviii. 25; Proverbs xx. 22, xxiv. 29, xxv. 21, 22). Yet, there is a difference of atmosphere about the self-same words when we meet with them in the New Testament.

The Proverbs especially occur almost without context. They are casual wise sayings. In the New Testament the corresponding teachings are "characteristic" and "central"; and the context in which they occur gives them new emphasis and appeal. (See St. Matthew v., vi., and xviii.; St. Mark xi. 20-26; St. Luke vi. 20-45, and xvii. 1-5; Romans xii.; Ephesians iv. 17-32; 1 Corinthians xiii.)

Progressiveness and Permanence

Two things may be said in drawing together the conclusions of this brief study of the progressiveness of the Law. On the one hand, it is a sure token of the success of legislation that it should be progressively surpassed. On the other hand, there are parts of the moral law which are as eternal as the stars.

Concerning the first point, just as every great-hearted teacher is proud to be outstripped by his pupils, so it is the very merit of the earlier written portions of the Bible that they laid the foundations for higher teaching in the later written portions. "Do not ask," says St. Chrysostom, "how these (Old Testament) precepts can be good, now when the need for them is past: ask how they were good when the times required them. Or rather, if you wish, do inquire into their merit even now. It is still conspicuous, and lies in nothing so much as in what now enables us to find fault with them. If they had not trained us well, so that we became susceptible of higher things, we should not have now seen their deficiency." *

* Quoted by Dr. Charles Gore in his famous paper on *The Holy Spirit and Inspiration* in *Lux Mundi*, page 241. At page 257 he quotes from Professor Robertson Smith's *Lectures on The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*: "Another point in which criticism removes a serious difficulty is the interpretation of the imprecatory Psalms." Dr. Gore adds: "To believe in the inspiration of Holy Scriptures is to put ourselves to school with every part of the Old Testament, as of the New. . . . Thus to believe, for instance, in the inspiration of the Old Testament forces us to recognise a real element of the Divine education in the imprecatory Psalms. They are not the utterances of selfish spite; they are the claim which righteous Israel makes upon God that He should vindicate Himself, and let their

With regard to the second point, when all is said about the progressiveness of the Law, it remains one of the marvels of history that the Ten Commandments still live with us, identically as they stand in the twentieth chapter of Exodus ; ³² and that it demands the whole of our moral and spiritual courage to look them thoughtfully and steadily in the face. Even if they do not go back (in some such form as quoted above) to Mosaic times, there is little enough in the history of the Hebrews as told by themselves to account for the appearance within the next five or six hundred years of a law so ideal. It is at points like this that the meaning of Inspiration begins to be realised. Those ten words of the Law abide. They are appropriately inscribed behind our altars and printed in our Prayer Books. Repeated through the centuries they have become a spiritual tableland of majestic elevation : from which, and not aside from it, rise as culminating peaks the sacred Mount of Transfiguration and the solemn height of Calvary.

eyes see how 'righteousness turns again unto judgment.' The claim is made in a form which belongs to an early stage of spiritual education ; to a time when this life was regarded as the scene in which God must finally vindicate Himself, and when the large powers and possibilities of the Divine compassion were very imperfectly recognised. But behind these limitations, which characterise the greater part of the Old Testament, the claim of these Psalms still remains a necessary part of the claim of the Christian soul. We must not only recognise the reality of Divine judgments in time and eternity, bodily and spiritual ; we must not only acquiesce in them because they are God's ; we must go on to claim of God the manifestation of His just judgment, so that holiness and joy, sin and failure, shall be seen to coincide."

CHAPTER III

The Bible largely Self-interpreting: Books of Job, Jonah, and Daniel

“The generally accepted results of criticism . . . rest on a number of phenomena actually present in the documents themselves.”

A. S. PEAKE. ³²

THE Bible was meant to be understood. That may be taken for granted. Passage after passage, book after book, each had its message, each its meaning. Much of this meaning lies on the surface. Where it does not, we are usually able to discover it by casting ourselves back in imagination to the times and the circumstances in which, part by part, the Bible was written. This is more than ever possible to-day with the help of the knowledge of Eastern life in ancient times which the researches of the last three-quarters of a century have brought within our reach. It is no doubt still true, as the distinguished Jewish scholar, Dr. C. G. Montefiore, has said, that many of the great utterances of the Old Testament have a depth of meaning for the Jewish reader even of to-day which they cannot have for the Christian reader.³⁴ None the less, in many ways the meanings of the Bible are clear and its teachings simple for readers of whatever race or time.

In the first place, actual contemporaneous history is the nucleus, the hard core, of Old and New Testaments alike. In the Old Testament, we have first-hand history in the writings of the prophets. Their words are hot from the

anvil; and the picture which they give of the condition of country and people is "unsurpassed in any literature for keenness of appreciation and accuracy of delineation."³⁵ Similarly with the New Testament. So long as we can, with certainty, date even four of St. Paul's letters—those to the Corinthians, the Romans, and the Galatians—between the years 50 and 60 A.D., and unhesitatingly accept them as his, we have first-hand history of the best sort, in the form of topical references to actual conditions, customs, institutions, places, people.

Moreover, both Old Testament and New contain much that is the direct expression of human thought and feeling. "The words of the Bible are a window into the souls of the men who penned them."³⁶ "Take, for example, the Book of Job. There must have come to this author some experience similar to that through which he represents his hero as passing. . . . Hosea through the tragedy of his own home rose to the conception that God was love."³⁷ Thus, its humanness and reality of reference help to make the Bible an understandable book.

No less does the method of the Bible as a literature help to make clear its meanings for its readers. By its free use of parable and story the Bible reaches the mind in the simplest and most impressive way. It teaches by picturing.

The Bible its own Interpreter

One thing, however, is necessary if the Bible is to be understood by us to-day. It must be *taken on its own terms*. Poetry must be read as poetry, drama as drama, prophetic story as prophetic story, vision as vision, parable as parable. Interpretations can no more be forced upon Scripture than they can upon any other book or writing. The various books of the Bible require to be read from the point of view of the writers themselves. So to read them is to find, as Dr. R. G. Moulton says in the Preface to *The Modern Reader's Bible*, that "the Bible is its own best interpreter."

We are going to test this statement in the present chapter, taking as examples the Books of Job, Jonah, and Daniel.

One or two minor examples may, however, first be noted. In the story of Balaam, a peculiar contradiction occurs. Whilst in Numbers xxii. 20 we read that God came to Balaam by night and said to him, "If the men be come to call thee, rise up, go with them"; verse 22 says, "And God's anger was kindled because he went." We also find that by omitting altogether the reference to the incident of the ass speaking, which is introduced by this strange contradiction, we can pass from verse 21 to verse 36 and read on quite connectedly. Are not these clear signs that we have a composite story? Verses 22 to 35, as the term "the angel of Jehovah" suggests, belong to the older Jehovist narrative, the remainder of the story being originally complete without it. Evidently, what we have is not pure history. The contradiction proves that. The story of the ass, culled from the older source, is to be read as a telling parable on the futility of disobedience. The main story stands out as a fine piece of patriotic writing, in which Jehovah is seen safeguarding His people's interests and converting intended curse into blessing by inspiring a hired enemy to speak in Israel's favour.

Again, we may take the expression in 1 Samuel xiii. 14, also popularly associated with difficulty, describing David, the youthful shepherd, as a man after God's own heart. Reading the words in their context, as part of Samuel's rebuke of King Saul, their direct and almost only meaning is that David is the man of Jehovah's choice for the kingship, expressed in Hebrew idiom. But for the fact that the words are quoted and amplified in Acts xiii. 22, it would be little short of wilful cavilling to make the expression imply Jehovah's approval of everything that David was or did. So far as the words in *Samuel* are concerned, they afford one of many examples of the way in which

misinterpretations may be removed by reading a passage in its context.

In each of these instances, on a fair reading the Bible interprets itself ; save that, in the first of them, we need to bring to bear the fact, expressed for us in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that it is a literature consisting of " divers portions."

The Book of Job

The Book of Job has won for itself an unchallenged eminence, almost pre-eminence, amongst the books of the world. The greater part of the book is a poem in dialogue ; the first two chapters and the closing verses containing a version of an older prose story into which the poem is fitted.

A remarkable figure in the prose introduction is the " Satan " of whom we heard in the Chronicles-story of the numbering of the people. He is not the Satan of our ordinary speech, the prince of evil or the devil ; but a peculiar sort of spiritual busy-body, who, in the mixed character of spy and challenger, unmasks hypocrisy and make-believe goodness, but who finds a grim satisfaction in detecting blemishes. In the present story, Jehovah is represented as recognising this " adversary's " office. He asks him whether he has not found in Job a perfect and an upright man. Satan replies that it pays Job to be righteous. " Touch all that he hath, and he will blaspheme against Thee to Thy face ! " The adversary is then permitted to put Job to the test. He leaves Jehovah's presence ; and brings sorrow upon sorrow, loss after loss, upon Job. But without effect. " Jehovah gave," said Job, " and Jehovah hath taken away ; blessed be the name of Jehovah ! " Again the adversary appears before Jehovah, and, instead of acknowledging defeat and conviction, demands the further trial of loathsome and painful disease. This, again, is without effect. Job replies : " Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil ? "

So far, in very truth, the patience of Job! But how evidently we are in a world of imaginary scenes; and, in the case of the adversary and others assembling before Jehovah, of imaginary personages! The question whether Jehovah and the Satan of the story really held those conversations needs no arguing. It is a vivid, imaginative word-picture, bearing upon the suffering that comes even to the best people.*

The poem opens in the third chapter. As the dialogue proceeds, we find Job terribly wounded in spirit. The lash of his friends' remonstrances adds poignancy to his bitter losses and to his bodily torment. Notwithstanding the general belief of his day, which Job at the outset shared, that all suffering is the penalty of wrong-doing, and his friends' accusations founded upon it, Job knows that he has not been guilty of grievous sin demanding this punishment. There is something almost sublime in the courage

* Concerning the probable early source of the prose sections of the story of Job, there was an interesting article in *The Contemporary Review* for December 1906 by Professor Jastrow of the University of Pennsylvania. In the library of the Assyrian king, Ashurbanipal (668-626 B.C.), first discovered by Sir Henry Layard about the middle of the last century, was found a tale of a Babylonian king, whose date cannot have been much later than 2000 B.C.; a man noted for his piety, but who was smitten with a painful disease. In his distress he appeals to Bel, the god of Babylon, and contrasts his life of service of the gods with the recompense he had received. His affliction seems to have been complete paralysis, involving loss of the powers of sight, hearing, and locomotion. In his prayer he admits that he may unwittingly have offended the gods, even when striving to please them. In answer to his prayer, his powers are restored to him one by one, and finally his full strength. The moral of the story is: In distress (even though the intercession of the priests may have failed you) pray to your god direct: if you deserve his mercy, your prayer will be answered: the divine anger, manifested toward you for some good cause which you may not be able to fathom, will be appeased. The theology of the Babylonian story is, thus, rather more closely akin to that of Job's orthodox "comforters" than to that which the Book of Job itself works out.

The likelihood of some such connection with a popular Eastern tale, if not this one in particular, is increased by the fact that Job himself is not pictured as a Hebrew, and that his friends' names are foreign and their homes in Arabia.

with which he stands his ground : " I will say unto God, Do not condemn me ; Show me wherefore Thou contendest with me. Is it good unto Thee that Thou shouldest oppress ? " (x. 2, 3). This is the theme of the poem. A problem lies at the heart of it. But a fresh revelation is seen to be breaking through as Job wrestles for an answer to the questions so bitterly forced upon his thought. " They," as Froude says, " to whom the precious gift of fresh light has been given are called upon to exhibit their credentials as teachers in suffering for it." ³⁸ Could but the curtain have been withdrawn, and either Job or his comforters or both have witnessed the preliminary scenes between Jehovah and the adversary ; could they have known the " plot " of the drama and the fearful strife of which Job's spirit was the chosen arena, how differently it would have appeared to them ! The tense interest of the poem is that the plot is unknown to the hero of it. He has to fight his way in the dark. But, for the reader, the path which Job's fearless spirit takes through the darkness is illumined by the opening scenes in Jehovah's heaven. The key to the argument between Job and his comforters, and finally between Job and Jehovah himself, *is already in our hands.*

The book may, accordingly, be described as a problem drama. It deals with the connection between suffering and Divine punishment for personal wrong-doing. At the very outset the idea of demerit on Job's part is dismissed from consideration. " There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil." Yet, on the strength of a mistaken belief, his friends charge him with imaginary sins. " Is not thy wickedness great ? Neither is there any end of thine iniquities." Then follows a list of the offences of which they jump to the conclusion that Job has been guilty (xxii. 6-11). Against this as an entire explanation of human trouble Job protests with rending pathos, and the Book of Job protests. Indeed, as the poem proceeds, we

draw near to the day-dawn of a larger faith. Job believes that God will clear him from the charges of his friends. It is not explicitly realised ; but a further point at issue is that a future life is essential in the moral economy of things. "If a man die, shall he live again?" Job asks in the midst of his despair (xiv. 7-15). "All the days of my warfare would I wait till my release should come." The thought grows upon him. God will not forsake him. "Thou wouldest call, and I would answer Thee: Thou wouldest have a desire to the work of Thy hands." And, again, when his agony is at its worst, he says,—

"Oh that my words were now written!
That with an iron pen and lead
They were engraven in the rock for ever!
For I know that MY VINDICATOR LIVETH."

These words, with those that follow (Job xix. 23-27), have been described as the first approach in Jewish literature to the idea of a life after death.³⁹ Read in the light of the drama as a whole, they may be compared to a river at its source. They flow from the springs whence the whole book derives its movement and its meaning, namely, the sacredness of life (ii. 4, xiv. 14); the inviolability of justice (viii. 3, xix. 25); and an unshakable faith in God (v. 8-23, xxvi. 7-14, xxxvi. 22-xxxvii. 24). On these great essentials Job and his comforters are in agreement. It is only on the question of the relationship between the second and the third, faith in God and in His justice, that Job's vigorous spirit clears a way through perplexity and pain to higher truth.

The Book of Jonah

Another example of the way in which the Bible does much to interpret itself is the Book of Jonah. To many this book is difficult enough. Yet, on the face of it, does not the story of the great fish suggest allegory rather than history, parable rather than fact? As it happens, however, we are not left to decide this for ourselves. There is a

passage in the Book of Jeremiah which supplies the key to this part of the story. It occurs in the course of a symbolic description of the Captivity, in a section of *Jeremiah* on the doom of Babylon (of later date than Jeremiah's own prophecies). We read: "Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me . . . he hath swallowed me up like a dragon" (LI. 34). And ten verses later, Jehovah's response: "I will do judgment upon Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up." The symbolism of the most difficult part of the story, the part that is too often made the subject of joke and gibe, is thus explained. The Book of Jonah is, almost self-evidently, to be read as a parable of the Captivity, of the causes that led up to it, and of the duty awaiting Israel after her return. Israel, the "Jonah" of the parable, had been bidden to act as the prophethood of Jehovah. Her testimony was to reach to all the peoples with whom she came in contact. She had not fulfilled her mission. Instead of doing so, she had herself fallen into frequent idolatries, deserting instead of prophesying. Therefore had Nebuchadnezzar devoured her, swallowing her up like a dragon. But afterwards Babylon herself fell before the victorious Cyrus of Persia, and the edict that the people might return was issued. In this way Bel, the Babylonian deity, was visited with judgment by Jehovah, who brought forth out of his mouth that which he had swallowed up. Now, after the return from exile, it is once again Israel's duty to be Jehovah's prophet amongst the peoples. "The word of the LORD came to Jonah (Israel) the second time, saying, Arise . . . and preach the preaching that I bid thee."

The story of Jonah thus fulfils a threefold purpose. It is a parable of the Captivity, and of why it befell. It is a missionary parable. And, as the latter, it broadens the nation's view of God. Jehovah, it shows, is the God also of other nations, tender and compassionate towards them, as towards the people first chosen to know His name.

"Should not I have pity on Nineveh, that great city ; wherein are more than six score persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand ; and also much cattle ? " Far, therefore, from being a target for flippant mockery, the Book of Jonah stands out as one of the most telling and powerful short stories ever written.

We clench our re-estimate of this nobly-conceived story when we allow the Bible to state its own case by comparing the story of Jonah with interpreting passages in the Book of Jeremiah. When this is done, the tangle caused by the attempt to make history out of parable is out of the way. In ridding ourselves of this tangle, here and elsewhere in Holy Writ, it will be seen how far we are from juggling with the sublime. We are simply reading the Bible, book with book, part with part, and discovering its own interpretation of its meanings.

These two books of *Job* and *Jonah*, whatever foundation they may have had in earlier stories, are clearly not to be read as history. They were, on the face of them, not intended to be so read. Passages like Job i. 6-12 and ii. 1-7, referring to "Satan's" conversations with God, bear their own evidence of being allegorical, and not historical, writing. So, also, even if we had not the quotations from Jeremiah LI. to explain them, do the references to the "great fish" in Jonah i. 17, ii. 1, and ii. 10 ; and, equally, the reference to the worm and the gourd in Jonah iv. 7.

It is often said, But did not Christ refer to the story of Jonah, and use it as an illustration ? Granted this use, and the reference to it as a "sign" ; yet what more is implied either for Speaker or for hearers than the presence of the story in the Old Testament Scriptures is intended to convey ? It was a prophetic story, a parable containing a message of warning and a solemn appeal. Its key-note was repentance ; just as the key-word of the Gospel was "Repent !" Would the people heed the "sign" ? The parable of repentance, as told in the Book of Jonah, had

as its sequel individual and national salvation. *Will the people heed the sign?* Not more than this can be safely inferred from the New Testament references to Jonah or to Nineveh. Did Nineveh actually repent? Of that in a moment. But had Nineveh repented, Nineveh need not have fallen. No city or nation that breaks away from its evil and builds its life afresh in God will utterly fall. That is the world-wide teaching of this missionary book. It was the sign given by Christ to "this generation" (St. Matthew XII. 39, 41, 42, St. Luke XI. 30; St. Luke XIX. 42). Did Nineveh, in an actual historical sense, repent? If it had, as has been pointed out, the repentance must have been either temporary or permanent. Had it been temporary and been followed by relapse, it would not have served Christ's purpose. It was not to a temporary or transient repentance that He was calling His contemporaries. Had repentance, in truth, been brought about by the preaching of the historical "Jonah, son of Amittai" (2 Kings XIV. 25) and been permanent, there would have been neither call nor justification a little more than a hundred years later for Nahum's scathing prophecies of doom: "Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and plunder; the prey departeth not. . . Behold, I am against thee, saith Jehovah of hosts; and I will show the kingdoms thy shame."

The Book of Daniel

A third example of a book, the reading of which is attended with difficulty, yet which when it is read carefully and as a whole does much to interpret its own meaning, is the Book of Daniel. The book carries within it distinct evidences of a late date of writing. And in its date lies its interpretation. One reason for thinking it considerably later than the Captivity is that the history of the times in which, according to its telling, Daniel would have lived is in some ways inaccurate. Whereas, the references to the later "third" and "fourth" kingdoms, Persia and Greece (mentioned by name in X. 20 and XI. 2),

are accurate ; as are also the references to the persecution by Antiochus of Syria (VIII. 9-12, XI. 21-45), representing the fourth kingdom. Antiochus is the "vile" (A.V.) or "contemptible" (R.V.) person of XI. 21. The description of his persecutions runs on to the third verse of chapter XII. ; but not without foretelling his doom—"he shall come to his end, and none shall help him" (XI. 45) ; and the final triumph of Israel—"Michael shall stand up . . . and thy people shall be delivered" (XII. 1).³⁹

The date of the book is thus fixed somewhere in the early days of the persecution, and before there were any of the remarkable victories of Judas Maccabæus to record. Things were looking very dark for the nation and for the faith at the time. The first public stand was being made against the attempt of Antiochus to enforce an alien religion upon Israel. And it was to nerve the small army of Hebrew heroes for their fight, that the great and ever-popular Book of Daniel was written. The first six chapters, and with them the history and prophecies of the last six, gather round the one central purpose of withstanding the heathen demand even to the death. The fiery furnace and the den of lions, whatever may be the possible history lying behind them during the Captivity, were no mere fancy pictures to the Maccabæan warriors. Nor, as the issue showed, were the omens of victory which the stories contained. The "excellent spirit" (Daniel VI. 3) of the staunch defenders of the faith opened the way for angels to defend (VI. 22) and for God to deliver (VI. 16). And in 142 B.C., for the first time since the Captivity, the nation was free.

Summary of Results

Studying the Bible as a self-interpreting book, with illustrations like these as our guide, it is impossible not to approach it with a freshened interest. A point of view, moreover, is gained with regard to the new light that has fallen across its pages.

Amongst the positive findings from taking the Bible in this way on its own terms, we will note here only two :—

(1.) The teaching is popular. As Calvin says in writing of the first chapter of Genesis, things were written in a style which, “without instruction, all ordinary persons indued with common sense are able to understand.” We shall have gone a considerable part of the way towards taking the Bible on its own terms, if we remember that every portion of it was necessarily, as well as wisely, written from the standpoint of the times in which the writer or writers lived, and in ordinary matters, of the knowledge and popular opinion of those times.

(2.) The Bible is marked, amidst all its diversity, by unity of purpose. Essayists, collators, psalmists, prophets, lawgivers, reformers, all set forth the claims of morality and religion as supreme.

More than that—and this is the essential wonder of the Bible as a power amongst men wherever its teachings go—it compels men to see that these claims are supreme. As no other book or books can, it wins heart and will and conscience to accept and to rejoice in these claims.

It is not difficult, therefore, to harmonise the devotional use of the Bible with whatever new light may be brought to bear interpretively upon its pages. Such statements as those made by Dr. F. J. Foakes-Jackson before the Cambridge Conference on Scripture Teaching in Secondary Schools in 1912 are mutually supplementary. “The more I study the Old Testament,” he said in one part of his progressive but balanced address, “the more conservative in a sense I tend to become, that is, I attach less importance to the question as to how the Old Testament assumed its present form, and more to what it means as it now stands”; whereas, a little further on in the same address, he urges that “the very fact that the Old Testament stimulates inquiry is an argument for its retention in our schools.” Preserving the same balance between the new learning, which he upholds, and the devotional use of

the Bible, Dr. Foakes-Jackson sums up on the side of its spiritual values which are heightened by clearer interpretations. "The Bible is not merely a literary puzzle. If it were that, it would have been dropped long ago. It is God's message to His people, and when it ceases to be that it is of little value to any one."⁴⁰

Neither the lapse of time nor the result of research diminishes the power of the Bible to make its own essential meaning plain, or lessens its value as a ministering Word of Life. As such, it lives on, gathering not losing strength from century to century.

CHAPTER IV

The Historical Groundwork in the Old Testament: The History Books and the Prophets

"The sacred literature is no less the vehicle of an actual life than are non-sacred literatures, but . . . God was in a special sense a factor in the life of the Jewish nation. He was as really, veritably, a factor in its life as Moses, or Samuel, or David, or Josiah, or Paul. Not that God has not been a factor in the life of other nations. The prophets see the feet of God elsewhere."

D. W. SIMON.⁴¹

NATURALLY, one asks how far we have assured history in the Bible. It is one thing to be warned against misreading parable as history, popular literature as science, drama as biography: but it would be quite another thing if we were to find ourselves unable to trace historical religions to historical sources, or to find the story of their development in reliable records. Whether as readers or as teachers, we need to know something of the bed-rock on which we build.

When we hear of folk-lore in the Bible, and that this or that story which we had thought of as history is anecdote or parable, we are at first prone to think that this greatest of literatures is being represented to us as built upon insecure foundations. Yet, when a great historian like Professor Freeman says that an untrue anecdote may be good history,⁴² that is, that it may truly represent character, and also that there must be some sort of truth in it for it to gain currency, we are given a moment's pause. More may go to the making of truth than the recounting

of facts. Truth is far more a matter of judgment, of constructive imagination, and reasoning, than a mere recital of events. Even strictly historical truth is the achievement of all our powers at play. When the chronicler has given us the facts, judgment and imagination must play around them before we get the history. If, when you are coaching a boy in elementary English history, you take down Shakespeare's *Henry V.* and read passages from it, he begins to ejaculate "Champion!" and the like. He feels the movement; he is getting the real history.

It takes nothing from the first chapter in Genesis to call it poetry. On the contrary, it invests that immortal page with reality and meaning; lifting it above the level of a mechanically communicated record to the level of living thought. To describe the Eden story as a "prophetic tale" is not to make it less as a contribution to religious truth; rather does it make it more. Truth is broader than facts. Truth includes facts and their meanings; facts and their value; facts and the moving energy which lies behind and within them. One may search long for a single incident which contains all the truth of a parable. But once the parable is told, it is found to include the truth of countless incidents. Parable, poetry, prophetic story, do not weaken the Bible's claim as a revelation of highest truth. They are not a lower path by which truth travels, and which might, with advantage, were it possible, be exchanged for a solid roadway of fact. They *are* the higher path, the solid roadway. They imply facts; but they are greater than the facts they imply. In quoting Aristotle on this point, one is certainly not calling a witness prejudiced on the side of what may be called the poetic method. "It was owing to wonder," he says, "that men began to philosophise at first just as it is now. . . . If these men theorised to escape from ignorance, clearly they pursued knowledge for the sake of knowing . . . and so the lover of myths is in a sense the lover of wisdom." Elsewhere he writes: "Poetry is a more philosophical and

a higher thing than history, for poetry tends to express the universal, but history the particular." ⁴³ At first, it may seem like taking something away from the authoritativeness of the Bible when we find that parts of it are to be read as poetry and story; but in reality a deeper interpretation is given to these parts.

Criticism, it is notorious, has in certain quarters been pushed to an illegitimate extreme. Yet, over thirty years ago, in the Preface to the tenth edition of *Lux Mundi*, Dr. Charles Gore affirmed the belief that "it was with the more conservative among the recent critics, and not with the more extreme, that the victory would lie,"—a prevision which has been abundantly justified. In the hands of reverent study we gain, not lose. It is the strait gate by which alone the whole truth enters in.

The Hard Core of Actual History

One of the chief tasks of the expert Bible student is that of burrowing down for us to the underlying facts. Though we fully recognise the historical value of parts of the Bible that are not, strictly speaking, history, it is still tremendously important for us to know where the non-historical ends and the strictly historical begins.

Seventy-five years ago no serious attempt of this kind could have been made. Research along many lines and scholarship in varied fields have now made it possible; though not as yet with any approach to completeness or finality. It is a thrilling story which tells of the discoveries which have brought "graven stone and written scroll" within reach of linguist, archæologist, and historian. Exploration of sites; finds in far-away monasteries; the disentombing of cities with their libraries and monuments, their temples, and tokens of their traffic; digging beneath sand and soil and débris in order to read the story of buried civilisations—often in a series of layers one overlying another:—these are forms of research of quite romantic interest. And very much of our knowledge of Biblical

references and meanings, and of our power to assign dates and to confirm records, is due to this kind of research. Tens (even hundreds) of thousands of records of ancient times, from engravings on the face of the bare rock and on massive stone to inscriptions on potsherds and papyrus, have been deciphered. Manuscripts have been studied; ancient libraries read.

The discovery in A.D. 1798 of the famous Rosetta Stone, now in the British Museum, is one remarkable illustration of our indebtedness to finds of this nature. The inscription, in itself of small moment, happened to be thrice repeated; in Greek, in popular Egyptian, and in the hieroglyphic or sacred language of the Egyptian monuments. The Greek was read without difficulty; and the general meaning of several lines in the popular text was soon made out. But the deciphering of the hieroglyphics was a bigger task. Of the gradual mastery of this peculiar language the *Guide to the Egyptian Collections in the British Museum* gives an illustrated account, which could scarcely fail to interest any reader. First, after more than twenty years, an alphabet was discovered; then followed words and their meanings. The key to the Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions was thus obtained.

But to the ancient languages of Persia, Media, and Babylonia there was still no key. The late Sir Henry Rawlinson, when stationed in the East as a young officer in the service of the East India Company, led the way in their decipherment. An inscription in these three languages had, by order of Darius the Great, been engraved at a height of over a hundred feet on the face of a rock at Behistun, in Kurdistan. At great risk, Rawlinson, already interested in the study, secured copies and paper impressions of the Persian text; and within ten years (1837-1847) succeeded in translating it, publishing alphabet and grammar along with the translation. He obtained also an impression of the Babylonian text, and he and others simultaneously worked out from it an alphabet, a grammar,

and the translation. By so doing they opened the way to the reading of Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions, with which, as already with the Egyptian, it then became possible to compare the Hebrew records, and to substantiate much Old Testament history. The absolute recency of the great mass of scholarship, to which this re-birth of tongues threw open the door, makes the study of the Bible one of the most up-to-date and, so far as appreciation of its results is concerned, one of the most popularly comprehensible lines of research.

Periods of Old Testament History

Turning now to the Biblical narrative, six periods stand out as affording landmarks in the record. At whatever risk of curtness, these will be touched upon, each in a word or two. They are, the period of the beginnings ; the period of the first move towards nationhood ; the period of the united and the divided monarchies ; the period of the Judaic monarchy ; the period of captivity ; and the period of restoration and return.

(1.) The strongly defined figure of Abraham stands at the head of Hebrew story. One great value of this part of the Bible narrative is that it shows the deep-rooted belief of the people of Israel in a religious beginning of their life as a tribe and nation. It may be that there is a mingling of individual and tribal history in the Biblical account, but such mingling would be "not incompatible with the view that in Abraham we have the great leader of a racial movement" (and we know that migrations such as he led actually took place), "and one who left his mark upon his fellow-tribesmen, not only by the eminence of his superior gifts, but by the distinctive features of his religious life." ⁴⁴ Moreover, revelation must, by its very nature, be personal and individual. Abraham was one of the first, so far as Biblical or any records go, to realise clearly that there is a Divine Voice that speaks with man,

and to have the faith to follow whither it led. This faith was handed down from generation to generation : a living bond between Jehovah and His people (Isaiah xxx. 21 ; Proverbs iii. 6 ; Deuteronomy xxx. 14, with which compare Romans x. 8). Abraham " moves before us on the page of Scripture as the man through whom faith, the living principle of true religion, first became a force in human affairs. It is difficult to think that so powerful a conception has grown out of nothing. As we read the story, we may well trust the instinct which tells us that here we are face to face with a decisive act of the living God in history, and an act whose essential significance was never lost in Israelite tradition." ⁴⁵ There are one or two supporting considerations. Since writing was well-known and practised, even at the earliest date which is assigned to Abraham, there may possibly have been written records which later writers used, though none have so far come down to us. Then, as pure fact, the pictures which the Bible gives are true to life. For one example, we have only to compare the incidents of the wells in the story of Abraham and the disputes that took place in " the unchanging East " between Arab tribes during the year 1923 regarding the possession of similar wells. Sir J. G. Frazer, again, in his *Folk-lore in the Old Testament* assures us that in vital parts of the story " the portraiture of manners in Jacob's biography is no mere fancy picture, but drawn from life." ⁴⁶

Evidently, therefore, the Bible gives us true pictures of the times. May we not accept its lead when it points to a historical origin, necessarily brilliant and unforgettable, for a faith that not merely shone forth amongst the Hebrews themselves, but that shines forth for the whole world from the pages which tell the story? For this faith such a beginning as Abraham's altar-building is far more vital than, say, the building of Solomon's Temple. If, then, we must postulate the equivalent of Abraham, why not Abraham himself? If the conditions, why not the man? Granted that no independent writings bearing Abraham's identical

name have been discovered,—though the names Abu-ramu, Sarat, Nahor, occur in ancient Babylonian contract tablets—yet the exploration of Bible lands is in its infancy, and no one can forecast what it may confirm. At the present moment there is nothing in the laws of logic, or in the keenness for truth which goes to make good history, to compel us to abandon the historical reality of Abraham, the great founder of the nation's life. The presumption lies the other way.

(2.) The first movements towards nationhood are recorded in the story of the years spent in Egypt. This story begins with Joseph. And concerning this part of the Bible narrative, again, we are told that "there is not a single feature which is out of harmony with what is known of this remote period." ⁴⁷

The story of Joseph itself contains Egyptian elements, a fact which increases the probability that it rests upon a foundation in fact. Very early Egyptian stories tell of famines, and of official distributors of relief. And there is other contributory testimony. In the year 1887 a native woman made a great find. She was hunting for antiquities amidst the rubbish heaps in the modern village of Tel-el-Amarna, the site of the capital of Amen-hetep IV. (about 1400 to 1350 B.C.),* the father-in-law and predecessor of Tutankh-Amen. She came upon some three to four hundred baked clay tablets of that and the earlier reign. Their contents vary greatly. There are personal letters, invitations, business letters, contract notes; but the larger number are official letters from local rulers in Syria and Palestine, from Jerusalem, Tyre, Sidon, Joppa, and other places, to their Egyptian overlord. This is proof of a

* Amen-hetep IV. was more a religious reformer than ruler. (See Peake's *Commentary*, pages 54, 55, 248; British Museum *Guide to the Egyptian Collections*, pages 236, 237.) Some trace to him a considerable influence on the religious reforms of Moses. (See Note 47a.) For statement and references see an article by Professor Duff in *Hibbert Journal* for January 1924, on *The Spiritual Legacy of Egypt to Us*.

political connection which would justify Jacob in sending his sons to Egypt for supplies, and provides a historical setting for that part of the Joseph story. Of the later Pharaoh who knew not Joseph, generally identified with Rameses II. [but see Note 47^a], we have many memorials; the most directly interesting to the Bible student, perhaps, being the re-discovery in 1883 of the city of Pithom (Exodus I. 11) with its treasure-houses strongly built of brick, some of the bricks having been made either without or with very little straw.

This brings us right up to the time of Moses. The statement of a well-known scholar that "the pre-Mosaic period is really prehistoric" ⁴⁸ (though we must be careful not to understand "prehistoric" as meaning "unhistoric") leaves Moses himself on the border line. And much that we are told concerning the Plagues (though these, doubtless, had "a firm foothold in real events"), and concerning the Wilderness journey up to the entrance into Jericho, would justify such a view. But concerning the historicity of Moses himself, the same kind of argument that has just been used regarding Abraham applies with even greater force. Of this critical moment in the nation's life Professor McNeile, writing in Hastings' *Smaller Dictionary of the Bible*, says, voicing current opinion, "While the denial that Moses was a real person is scarcely within the bounds of sober criticism, it does not follow that all the details related of him are literally true to history." The dependence of the writers upon oral tradition for many of these details accounts for the uncertainty.

One or two leading statements will suffice to put the matter fairly before us. The first is from the pen of the distinguished Hebraist, the late Principal W. H. Bennett. Writing in Hastings' larger *Dictionary*, he recites as facts upon which the ancient sources and most modern critics agree (a) That Moses was a leader under whom Israel was delivered from bondage in Egypt and from peril of annihilation by the Red Sea, and by whom it was governed

during its sojourn in the Wilderness ; (b) that through him Israel received a revelation which was a new departure in the national religion, and the foundation of Judaism and Christianity ; and (c) that he originated or formulated many customs and institutions from which the later national system was developed ; that, thus, (d) Israel owed to Moses its existence as a nation ; and (e) Moses is a unique personality of supreme importance in Old Testament history. For those who are inclined to be surprised at the reference to the passage across the bed of the Red Sea, one or two other notable opinions may be quoted. Ewald endorses the fact as historical, " whatever may have been the exact course of this event." The latter Wellhausen explains by saying that a high wind left the shallow sea so low that it became possible to ford it. Any one who has seen water falling over the ledge of a mountain being blown back as spray by an opposite wind will realise the power the wind may have in this way. Professor Kittel in his *History of the Hebrews* says that the passage through the Red Sea, in addition to being in itself a historical fact, is a link in a chain which implies other facts, earlier as well as later. Not only, says a writer in the *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge*, did Moses liberate Israel and thus help it to a national existence, but he was, " according to a unanimous tradition which no criticism can overthrow," the human author of the theocracy in its national form.

So far from being obliged to give up our belief in the reality of the world's greatest lawgiver as a historical personage, we may, with less risk of error, accept the point of view of Bible story and of strong Jewish tradition and regard him as " the real architect of Israel, binding the people to Jehovah." And, with regard to the deliverance from Egypt, may it not be taken for granted that no nation would gratuitously affront itself by tracing its origin to an ignominious bondage, had there been no foundation for the story in historical fact ? It is equally certain that from such a state of bondage there would have been no escape

without a leader and deliverer. Thus, if convincing evidence of the reality of Moses were needed, the very existence of the nation would appear to be such evidence.

And, further, when one recalls that to the escape of that people from serfdom, the world owes the Ten Commandments, the Psalms, the prophets and their teachings—in a word, the whole of the Old Testament and the life it represents—the presupposition of Divine Power which runs through the story of the deliverance (“He made known His ways unto Moses”) finds a striking confirmation. The freeing of this people from bondage and the value to the race of the literature they lived to produce, form, when taken together, so singular a unity that it cannot be regarded as fanciful to speak of the hand of God in history.

(3.) The times of the kings fall well within the historical period. We are told that David appointed a recorder. Chronicles were, therefore, kept; and it is believed that a native Hebrew writing came into use in David's reign. To David's own pen are attributed the noble lament over Saul and Jonathan (about 1009 B.C.), and the brief elegy on the death of Abner. Important short pieces, namely, “Jacob's blessing of his sons” in Genesis XLIX., written to celebrate the union of the twelve tribes bearing the names of members of Jacob's family, and the first four prophecies of Balaam, putting back upon the lips of the heathen soothsayer the praises of the kingdom in its strength, are assigned to the period of the United Monarchy.

David remained loyal to Jehovah throughout his reign (about 1003-971). Solomon, unfortunately, fell into idolatry (1 Kings XI. 4-9). At the end of his forty years' rule, the Ten Tribes revolted and became a separate kingdom under Jeroboam (1 Kings XII. 16-33).

Up to the fall of Samaria and the dispersal of the Ten Tribes in 722 B.C., the kingdoms of Israel and Judah lived side by side; sometimes in alliance, sometimes fighting against each other. The natural tendency was for each

kingdom to have its own patriotic literature. To this period, accordingly, belong the southern prophetic history, probably of the ninth century, of which we have spoken in connection with the Garden of Eden and the older of the Flood stories, the Balaam, Abraham, and other stories. This is the Jehovist writing already mentioned. There was also a northern prophetic history, the Elohist writing (see notes on pages 11, 128), probably of the eighth century, and, like the Jehovist, largely concerned with earlier traditions. Other examples of northern and southern patriotic literatures, to be dated probably between 920 and 900 B.C., are the northern stories of the "Greater Judges," Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson; and, from the south, the portion of the story of David's reign contained in 2 Samuel ix.-xx. The latter is accepted as excellent history; much of it, as also of the account we have of Saul, being probably from contemporaneous or almost contemporaneous records.

The Books of Kings and Chronicles were not written till later. They are referred to in the periods to which they belong. Peculiarly interesting confirmations from contemporary sources of many of the stories of the kings of Israel and Judah have, however, come to hand within recent years through the unearthing of foreign, and especially of Assyrian, inscriptions.

In 1869, for example, a stone was found, known as the Moabite Stone, which belongs to the ninth century before Christ. It tells how King Omri of Israel had conquered Moab and imposed a heavy tribute, against which Mesha, King of Moab, rebelled. The inscription begins, "I, Mesha, am the son of Chemosh, King of Moab, the D(a)ibonite. My father reigned over Moab thirty years, and I reigned after my father. . . . Omri, King of Israel, afflicted Moab for many days, because Chemosh was angry with his land." Mesha's revolt was successful; for though he was beaten in battle by the Israelites, the victors were so appalled by his desperate sacrifice of his eldest son as a burnt-offering

to secure the favour and aid of his god, Chemosh, that they withdrew and returned to their own land. The Hebrew story thus tells of an Israelite victory. The story of Mesha inscribed on the Moabite Stone tells of his final success. Putting together the parallel passages in the inscription and in 2 Kings III., this gives corroborated history for about the year 852 B.C.

Again, a sentence in the Biblical account of the reign of Jehu (2 Kings x. 32) finds further illustration than is afforded by its context in the "Black Obelisk" of Shalmaneser III. (859-824), found by Sir Henry Layard during his fruitful excavations in 1845 onwards, and now in the British Museum. The sentence reads: "In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short"; and the context refers to defeats at the hands of Hazael, King of Syria. Whether or not the tribute was a bribe paid by Jehu to secure the help of Shalmaneser against Hazael, the obelisk contains a pictorial representation and a lettered description of such payment of tribute by Iaua (Jehu), the son of Khumri (Omri); the incorrect designation "son of Omri" in all probability being used to indicate that Jehu belonged to Israel, whose land was known to the Assyrians as "the land of Omri." This gives us history, corresponding to the condition of things in Israel as shown in the Bible narrative, for about the year 842 B.C.

Another striking corroboration of a Biblical record, namely, that of Hezekiah's heavy payment to Sennacherib (about 701 B.C.), is engraved upon a six-sided baked clay prism or "cylinder," also to be seen in the British Museum, which contains the fifth and final edition of Sennacherib's annals. The Biblical record is in 2 Kings XVIII. 13-16, and tells frankly enough of huge payments made by Hezekiah to the Assyrian king. Sennacherib's parallel account, couched in boastful terms such as the contents of the corresponding chapter in the Book of Kings might lead us to expect, runs as follows: "I then besieged Hezekiah of Judah who had not submitted to my yoke, and I captured

forty-six of his strong cities and fortresses and innumerable small cities which were round about them, with the battering of rams and the assault of engines, and the attack of foot soldiers, and by mines and breaches (made in the walls). . . . (Hezekiah) himself, like a caged bird, I shut up within Jerusalem, his royal city. I threw up mounds against him . . . and I reduced his land. I added to their former yearly tribute, and increased the gifts which they paid unto me. The fear of the majesty of my sovereignty overwhelmed Hezekiah, and the Urbi (Arabians?) and his trusty warriors, whom he had brought into his royal city of Jerusalem to protect it, deserted. And he dispatched after me his messenger to my royal city Nineveh to pay tribute and to make submission with thirty talents of gold, eight hundred talents of silver, precious stones . . . ivory couches and thrones, hides and tusks, precious woods, and divers objects, a heavy treasure." ⁴⁹ Of the return blow (2 Kings XIX. 20-35) Sennacherib says nothing. But, singularly, the Greek historian, Herodotus, tells an Egyptian story which contains within it something more than an echo of the history as related in *Kings*. (When Herodotus gives us hearsay, he is often unreliable; but in this case, though his hearsay narrative is feeble enough, both in itself and as compared with the Bible story, he speaks also of a monument that was still standing when he wrote.) It will be remembered that Hezekiah was a confederate of Egypt (2 Kings XVIII. 21). With a mighty host, Sennacherib had reached the very borders of their land. Egypt's king-priest sought the help of his god, as in the Bible story Hezekiah did; and a marvellous deliverance was given. The commemorative statue in Egypt, of which Herodotus tells us, bore the inscription: *Let him that looks on me learn to fear the gods.*⁵⁰

Many other examples might be cited, giving sometimes minute confirmations of details of Bible story. But our chief purpose is to illustrate the freshness of the appeal of the Bible to the reader of to-day. The recency of the

unearthing of ancient monuments and inscriptions, some on the eve of, others actually within, the present century, gives a peculiarly new interest to Biblical study. Whilst losing nothing of the intimacy and warmth which it had for the hearts and minds of our fathers for many generations, the Bible reinvests itself with intellectual values at the very moment that for some reason or reasons it had begun to cease to be read freely and earnestly for its own sake. Suddenly it awakes, and puts on strength—the strength of an intellectual appeal, which to the modern mind is the first guarantee of spiritual light and power. The vision opens out before us, as it has done at many a critical moment in the course of the centuries, of a Divine Word that is in actual touch with the lives of men.

(4.) After the fall of Samaria, the kingdom of Judah survived till 586 B.C. It was not long before its defeat by Nebuchadnezzar, and the ensuing captivity, that King Josiah and his advisers made a great effort to rally the people to the faith; the amount of idolatry, in spite of the appeals of prophets and the warning of Israel's fall, being appalling.

In the year 621 B.C., the Book of the Law (spoken of in the second chapter) was brought forth from the Temple by the high priest, Hilkiah. Its bearing upon the need of moral and religious reformation even a rapid glance at its pages reveals. An account of its effect is given in 2 Kings xxiii., from which it will be enough to quote one verse: "And he (Josiah) defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire of Molech."

To this Deuteronomist school of writers we owe the Books (originally one book) of Kings. It is a book of history in a very different sense from the Jehovist and Elohist documents we have referred to: a book written, almost without doubt, with the chronicles or annals of the reigns of the kings it mentions either before the writers or within

their reach. Hence the recurring formula, "The rest of the acts of — and all that he did, are they not written in the books of the chronicles of the Kings of Israel?—of Judah?" The formula has, however, a deeper meaning. It is something more than an "et cetera." It means that the method of the writers or editors was purely selective, and selective with a purpose. They were not so much aiming to write history as to give point to the verdict: "he did that which was right in the sight of Jehovah," or "he did evil in the sight of Jehovah"; which was their way of summing up a monarch's record and the part he played in the nation's destiny. Readers who wanted history could, if they would, look up the references: "The rest of the acts, are they not written?" But the eyes of these writers are on the trend of things in their own time. What they quote from the past is, in its chief motive, by way of example and illustration. Intentionally, they write not a scientific, but a prophetic or preaching, history. They select stories from the records of the kings and interweave with them popular traditions, as in the case of Elijah and Elisha, with the one object of enforcing the truth that in loyalty to Jehovah alone was the people's strength; in falling away from Jehovah their weakness. It is just because the Book of Kings was written with this as its dominating thought that what its writers have given to the world is not simply a handbook of Jewish history, but a portion of the Bible.

At the same time, there is little doubt that many of the examples from the lives of the kings and from the fortunes of the people under their rule were taken from official or other fairly authenticated sources. And there is a sense in which even a surface reading of the book yields an impression of trustworthiness. It is written with splendid candour. The patriotism which puts truth in the foreground stands higher with its writers than the delusive patriotism of self-praise. In this the Book of Kings compares favourably with some of the inscriptions of

foreign monarchs. Though the Assyrian inscriptions are accepted as accurate in chronology and in respect of the events they actually record, they are prone to be self-congratulatory and to leave out records of defeats.⁵¹ The writers of *Kings* also may have had before them official records which were slightly biased in this way (as in the account of the revolt of Mesha): but these writers themselves had no such bias. The spirit of Deuteronomy is the clue to their spirit. Their purpose was to recall the people to their fidelity to Jehovah.

(5.) The fifth of the periods chosen for topical reference is that of the Captivity. It was a time of reflection and re-birth. Ezekiel and the writer of Isaiah XL. to LV. prophesied. The Book of Daniel may be taken as true in its general testimony that brave men lived. The Book of Nehemiah is direct evidence that they did; and that, a hundred and forty years after the commencement of the Captivity, the fire of a rightly inspired patriotism still burned.

One literary outcome of this period and of the experience for which it stood was another quasi-history book going back to the Creation. Actually, it was a law code rather than a history; but it was a code presented in the garb of history. We traced Genesis I. and one of the Flood stories to this source. When, some having already returned, Ezra came with his band to a rebuilt temple and a more or less restored city, this new charter of nationhood was solemnly read by him before all the people and accepted by them as law. It is briefly described in the second chapter.

The Captivity and the Return have been described as the most extraordinary event in the world's history. "It appears not like a process of evolution, but like a work of re-creation. . . . Israel was remade by the Exile: this is a patent fact of history."⁵² In a literary sense, also, and from the point of view of the making of the Bible, it was a time of great activity. New writings, prophetic and

otherwise, appeared. Besides the later chapters of Ezekiel and Isaiah xxxiv., xxxv., and xl. to lv., some Psalms were doubtless written, and parts of the Book of Lamentations. Moreover, extremely important work was done by way of re-editing older writings which now for the first time the people began really to value. (There were first and second captivities from Judah, in 597 and in 586 B.C. This interval gave the time, and the threat of the destruction of Jerusalem* gave the incentive, to collect and preserve copies of the older writings.) Many of the books of the Bible underwent what was practically their final editing. And, as we have already noted in one or two special cases, the literature of Babylonia both directly and indirectly influenced Hebrew literature in various ways. Thus "the Babylonian exile," says Professor C. F. Kent, "was more than a crisis; it represented a fundamental transformation in the political, social, and religious character of the race. . . . The wreck of the ancient state cleared the way for the construction of the new. . . . In the place of the monarchy rose the hierarchy. . . . During that half century, when the Jewish race was pinioned hand and foot, mighty changes were going on within its throbbing heart." ⁵³

(6.) In the course of a generation or two the fact of many of the people being back upon their own soil becomes the occasion for another glance back to the beginnings. The Book of Chronicles, or, as many think, the Book of Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah (300 to 250 B.C.), goes back once more to Adam. The history is re-written; and, though there are frequent similarities through direct borrowing between it and *Samuel* and *Kings*, the history is this time written with a still freer pen. The kings that had in the past feared Jehovah are pictured as observing the ritual of the new code! The Book of Chronicles, that is to say, writes up the history of the past in the light of the new standards of the new days. Its tendency to idealise is also shown in

* Cf. Jeremiah xxvii. 16-22.

its silence concerning David's more grievous sins and concerning Solomon's idolatry. (The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah are more exact as history, being almost certainly based on memoirs which those two leaders kept.)

The Successive Histories and their Purport

Closing at this point our rapid review of the history books of the Bible, the result, as in the case of the Law, is the discovery of a kind of stratification. We have history upon history, the later no doubt borrowing from the earlier, but each affected by the spirit and the needs of the times in which it was written. These successive histories were written to show one thing, namely, that God was the chief actor in the nation's life, more important to the people and to the world than all earthly rulers.

It is a great thing to have the truth presented with such vividness, that the course of human history is not solely man's affair. The writers who make this plain might, without undue extravagance, be said to be showing us how to write history. There is always more or less present in our minds an instinctive belief in the same Hand at work in the shaping of events as that which played the master-part in Hebrew story. And, as the Bishop of Manchester has lately said: "A man's whole view of history is bound to be coloured by his answer to the question whether the course of man's history is, or is not, providentially guided. . . . Righteousness is vindicated by the disaster that follows upon injustice and selfishness." ⁵⁴

Thus the outcome of the briefly outlined story which the Bible contains of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah and their fall, is to reveal true principles of government, of leadership, and of public and private well-being. The world is not safe for humanity on any other terms than those which prophets of God proclaimed to the Hebrew kings and the Hebrew people. The Bible is the expression

of this truth ; richly, unspeakably, full of this—the ultimate truth for all men and peoples everywhere. In the words of a recent writer : “ The shining goal of our bewildered and yet wonderful age is the Kingdom of God, which challenges us to establish its sovereignty in the modern world.” ⁵⁵

Key-words of Old Testament Interpretation

We have now the two chief key-words of Old Testament interpretation. It is a *progressive* literature ; and it is a *prophetic* literature. Even more than with an actual (or scientific) history, the Bible furnishes us with a method, or an interpretation, of history. It presents a philosophy of history ; viewing its processes from the standpoint of social and national values.

THE PROPHETS AS HISTORIANS

Prophecy and history are so closely bound together in Hebrew story as told by Old Testament writers that to speak of the one is almost to speak of the other. Very few words, therefore, are needed by way of direct reference to the historical aspect of prophecy.

As was mentioned at the beginning of the third chapter, we have first-hand history of the very best kind in the writings of the prophets. The one essential to an understanding of their writings is to know the periods to which they belong ; information which they usually give us themselves. Then their pen-pictures become history of the first order. Take, for instance, Isaiah i. 7 : “ Your country is desolate ; your cities are burned with fire ; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.” This is part of an utterance of reproach and of invitation to repentance (i. 2-20), and fits exactly the period of Sennacherib’s invasion when, as we have read, he captured the cities round Jerusalem and shut in Hezekiah “ like a caged bird.”

A later passage (LXIV. 10, 11) reads : " Thy holy cities are become a wilderness, Zion is become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned with fire ; and all our pleasant things are laid waste." These are the words, not of Isaiah of Jerusalem, but of a prophet of or after the Exile, regarding with sorrow the wasted city and Temple. That is to say, that the book of *Isaiah* being on the face of it composite, the moment we note the dates we see the appropriateness and force of the descriptions. Isaiah of Jerusalem, Amos, and Hosea prophesy before, but within a very short period of, the fall of Samaria. (See Appendix A.) Jeremiah prophesies up to the very date of the captivity of Judah. They were not gloomy pessimists, therefore. They were men of courage, speaking out their vision of perils that threatened. They were face to face with evil. They faced it and fought it at the peril of their lives. (For proof of this one needs but to turn to 1 Kings XIX. 2, or to Jeremiah XXVI. and XXXVI. 26.)

The best kings were those who made the prophets their counsellors. We have contrasting pictures in the story of Ahab and Elijah and in that of Isaiah and Hezekiah. Heeded or not, the prophets were practical idealists. They saw and noted with almost strained attention the events of their time. They saw also beneath the surface, and their clear vision of the operation of moral and spiritual law revealed to them the trend and the inevitable outcome. What they saw, they wrote. In the books of the prophets we have history as seen in actual progress. Just as science foretells effects from given causes, so " the Prophet, an earnest and faithful student of God's laws in religion and ethics, will state the issue of a social condition or of a spiritual attitude." ⁵⁶ A man reading events by the aid of this spiritual insight will see more deeply into their meaning and tendency. And there is the further fact of Inspiration,—real, if not easy to define. An inspired man

sees more history, and writes profounder history, than an uninspired man. Thus, the prophets of the Old Testament not only dealt directly with their times and wrote of things as they were, but in at least two ways they struck deeper down to the very roots of human story. In the first place (as also in the case of the writers of the "histories"), the history that comes to us from the pen of the prophet is history with God in it. This is history in its nobler phase. Man's life, viewed from this standpoint, is inevitably seen to be full of shortcomings. Accordingly, the prophet often writes warningly, reprovably. Yet, on that very account, his is a constructive reading of the facts before him. One proof of this, in the words of Principal Sir George Adam Smith, is that, "from the time of the Reformation to our own, there never has been a city of Protestant Europe which has been stirred to higher ideals of justice and purity, without the reawaking of those ancient voices which declared to Jacob his sin and to Israel his transgression."⁵⁷ But the dominant note of prophecy, as seen by its effects, is not negative, but corrective. Its warnings and its threatenings are all conditional. Its real note is constructive. Hence, in another way prophecy strikes deep down to the root of things. It records a reality other than is seen. It reads beneath the surface, and, from its complete vision of life as it is, it passes on to a vision of life as it might be. Reading life as completely as they did, the prophets have visions of the real Divinely lifted up towards the ideal. They see what is in the making. "In that day," they repeat with untiring recurrence; and they break out anticipatively—and that is one wondrous part of the foretelling side of prophecy—into portrayals of their vision and into songs of exultation.

Thus it is that the Hebrew poets and prophets as historians write for all time. The twentieth century after Christ is as near to the truth their words unfold as were the centuries before Christ in which they wrote. They give us a clear picture of the conditions of their own times;

but with them they give us also interpretations which are timeless. Few are the national cabinets that would not admit that in the counsels of the prophets are the principles of the public and private righteousness that exalteth a nation. Actually, we are implicit believers in the reign of God, thanks to no influence, outside the New Testament, greater or more effectual than that of the historians, the poets, and the prophets of Israel.

CHAPTER V

The Historical Groundwork in the New Testament

I. THE GOSPELS

“ Christ must come.”

“ The history of the world previously is the preparation for Him : subsequent history proceeds from Him.”

SIR W. M. RAMSAY.⁵⁸

How new is the New Testament ? There is an answer in the words of the sceptical, yet restrained, Renan : “ It was then for some months, perhaps a year, that God truly dwelt upon the earth.”⁵⁹ It is that Life which the New Testament records : that Life, and its immediate effects. It is more than New, therefore ; it is unique.

Nevertheless, the two Testaments are one Bible. This the most casual reading of the Gospels, the letters of St. Paul, and the Epistle to the Hebrews makes clear. In turning from the Old Testament to the New, therefore, we are on the one path, but the path has led up to a table-land of clearer and fuller vision.

Old and New Testament Literatures compared

Coming with somewhat prepared minds from a brief study of the methods and meaning of the Old Testament as a literature, the readiest way to approach the New will be by a word or two of comparison, noting similarities and differences.

(i.) Amongst the similarities, not of thought and teach-

ing—that were far too large a matter to take up here for a moment's treatment—but of literary method and purpose, we note that both in the Old and in the New Testaments we have an impregnable core of first-hand history, written in each case in response to the pressing need and circumstances of the hour; in the Old Testament the writings of the prophets, in the New Testament the letters of St. Paul. (ii.) Earlier origins of portions of the literature are in each case traceable. (iii.) Each finds corroboration from outside sources; and—an interesting detail—both Old and New Testament chronologies are fixed by means of secular history. We have Old Testament dates fixed and events corroborated as far back as the middle of the ninth century B.C. by working back from the year 763 B.C.; known to astronomers by calculation as the date of an eclipse of the sun mentioned in the Assyrian annals, and handed over by them as a fixed point in Old Testament chronology to the Bible student. Many New Testament dates are arrived at from Roman evidence, *e.g.*, the dates when Quirinius was first appointed chief magistrate of the colony of Antioch (St. Luke II. 2), and when Gallio was Proconsul at Corinth (Acts XVIII. 12).

Noticeable as are these similarities, the literary differences between Old Testament and New are even more marked. (i.) Whilst, however truly inspired, the Old Testament resembles all old-world literatures in that its earliest portions grew up around national and local traditions, folk-lore, ancient songs, and poems; around popular customs, existing institutions, existing codes of law, and the like; we have in the New Testament the direct inbreaking of something new. Building itself around beginnings already made,* the ministry of Jesus was none the less new to the point of marvel.† One has but to

* See Old Testament references in St. Matthew iv. 7, 10, 14; St. Mark I. 2, 3, II. 25; St. Luke iv. 17-22; and compare St. John I. 9 (R.V.), 10.

† See St. Matthew iv. 24, vii. 28; St. Mark v. 20, vii. 37, ix. 2; St. Luke v. 8-10, viii. 35, ix. 20, xxiv. 32; St. John I. 14, 26-27, 49, xviii. 6.

read the first chapter of *St. Mark* or the Sermon on the Mount to feel assured of this. The new light came in "the fullness of the time"; but neither do the Old Testament and the life it stands for nor do the intervening life and literature of the two centuries before Christ occasion it, still less account for it. (ii.) The span of the Old Testament literature, independently of more ancient sources, is, roughly, about eleven hundred years; from the Song of Moses at the crossing of the Red Sea (very possibly contemporaneous), usually dated about 1250 B.C., to the completion of the Psalter about 150 B.C. The span of the New Testament literature is probably about fifty years, or, allowing an extreme date for the Second Epistle of Peter (put by some at about A.D. 150), little more than a hundred years. (iii.) The Old Testament, great as are its actual merits, owes most of its vogue as a world literature to the New Testament. (iv.) The books of the New Testament are far less composite and are before us much more in the original form in which they left their first writers' hands than most of those of the Old Testament. As an offset to this, however, it is abundantly clear that the text of the books of the New Testament was not treated with the same strict scrupulousness during the second century, or even during the first four centuries, as marked the care which the Jews took of the Hebrew Scriptures from the beginning of the second century onwards.

The Confirmation of the Text

We are richly provided with materials for the study and confirmation of the text of the New Testament. In the first place, there are several translations of which the Latin (middle of second century), the Syriac (Gospels only, second century), and the Egyptian or Coptic (third century) are of very high value. Again, as early as A.D. 170, a "Harmony" or blended narrative of the four Gospels was prepared in Syriac, which still exists in Arabic and Armenian translations. Then, the books of the New

Testament were frequently quoted by the early writers of the Church of the first, second, third, and later centuries. More important still, we have actual manuscript copies of the New Testament going back as far as the fourth century. One, from which some of the later books of the Testament are missing, is at Rome (known as "the Vatican") and was named in the Vatican catalogue of 1475. Another (the Sinaitic), a perfect copy, was found by Tischendorf, after considerable difficulty and adventure, in a monastery on Mount Sinai about the middle of the last century; it is now in the Library of Leningrad. A manuscript of the fifth century (the Alexandrine), from which, unfortunately, most of St. Matthew is missing, is in the British Museum. The Codex Ephræmi at Paris and the Codex Bezaë at Cambridge are also of great value.

Our present Greek Testament is the result of comparing very many manuscripts—from three thousand to four thousand are now known, containing either the whole or parts of the New Testament; use being made also of the early translations into other languages, and of the many quotations by early Christian writers. It is thus a remarkably well-attested book. Taking merely the three most important manuscripts, Tischendorf says: "For no single book of classic Greek antiquity is it possible to summon three primitive witnesses comparable to the Sinaitic, the Vatican, and the Alexandrian codices for the confirmation and rectification of its text."⁶⁰

Problems, both of a literary and of a historical character, are raised by the Gospels. But it is wonderfully reassuring to the general reader to know that in considering them the chief document, and one in which we may have such confidence, is in every one's hands. The English Testament contains the problems "and even suggests their solution"; there being, says one of our leading scholars, only two things of capital importance for which we have to depend on the textual experts: (1) that the last verses of *St. Mark* (xvi. 9-20) have been substituted

for a lost ending, and (2) that about the middle of the second century an edition of the four Gospels was circulated which contained a number of additions, some of which may have almost as good a claim to be accepted as history as much that is given in the original and authentic text.⁶¹ The story of the woman taken in adultery, usually and rightly regarded as self-authenticating, is an example of this kind of later addition.

*Historical Values. General View of the First Three
("Synoptic") Gospels*

Almost everything turns upon who the writers of the Gospels were, and how the material came to their hands. It will readily be understood that more than one stage intervened between the Life and the written record. First of all, things seen and heard during those months of intimate companionship would be imprinted deeply upon the disciples' memory. And these memories would form the staple of their teaching and preaching. By frequent repetition and an inevitable process of selection, an oral tradition would be built up. This earliest tradition would naturally be in the language in which Christ spoke, almost certainly the Hebrew (Aramaic) dialect in common use in Palestine. Fragments of Christ's speech in this dialect appear here and there in the Gospels; *Talitha cumi*; *Corban*; *Ephphatha*; *Abba*; *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani* (St. Mark v. 41, vii. 11, vii. 34, xiv. 36, and xv. 34). But, as the teaching and preaching spread and Gentile churches were formed, the common language of the people, which was a popular form of Greek, would be used. In this way, a secondary or Greek oral tradition would spring up.

It will already be seen that the problem is not likely to be free from difficulty. Perhaps the best way of approaching it will be, taking, as we must, oral tradition as the foundation of the written Gospels, to state briefly what are the widely accepted views concerning their origin and

authorship, and then to notice some of the chief arguments on which these views rest.

Every reader of the first three Gospels is familiar with the constant repetition in two, and often in all three, of the same stories in almost the same words. If that which we are thus told were all that there was to tell, this would not be surprising. But when a careful examination shows that events are recorded belonging to only some forty days in Christ's ministry, whereas at the lowest estimate that ministry lasted for four hundred days, there must be a reason why, from the undoubtedly wide range of choice, this selection should be made in common by writers who differ greatly in point of view.

A written groundwork is at once suggested. And either, as is generally believed, in its present, or—to meet all views—in an earlier (or even in a later) form, the facts point somewhat conclusively to *St. Mark* as the original Gospel. An early second century writer, quoted by the historian Eusebius, tells us that what St. Mark has recorded is to all intents and purposes the substance of St. Peter's teaching. "Mark," wrote Papias, a bishop of the church in Asia Minor (about A.D. 125-140), "having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without, however, recording in order what was said or done by Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him; but afterwards, as I said, (attended) Peter, who adapted his instructions to the needs (of his hearers)." The Greek word for "interpreter" in this passage is usually taken to mean "translator"; but should it mean "expounder," or even only "attendant," the effect is not very different. Referring back to a preceding paragraph, it can scarcely be accidental that all the instances of the quotation of Christ's actual speech (in Aramaic) are found in *St. Mark*; only one of them, indeed, being quoted elsewhere (*St. Matthew* xxvii. 46). This may point to the existence when St. Mark wrote his gospel in Greek of an earlier Aramaic Gospel, possibly

by St. Mark himself. But it may also be due to the emphasis thrown upon the words in the preaching of one who had been so keen an eyewitness as St. Peter; the preacher's emphasis fixing them in St. Mark's memory even whilst, as interpreter, he was translating them. In the one case, we are in touch with an early-written Aramaic tradition; in the other case, we should have an absolutely original Greek Gospel—rough-edged, unconventional—a considerable part of it coming to us through its author from the lips of the leader amongst the disciples.

St. Mark appears to have served its mission in the life of the early Church rather as a source-book incorporated in *St. Matthew* and *St. Luke* than as an independent Gospel. This point came up briefly in the first chapter. In accounting for the writing of St. Luke's Gospel, the German theologian, Harnack, says "without hesitation" that St. Luke intended his Gospel to supersede that of St. Mark; but that, as the large use he made of it showed, he none the less regarded it as containing on the whole a trustworthy tradition.⁶² And the first Gospel has even been described as a "second edition" of *St. Mark*, revised, rearranged, and enriched with new material.⁶³

Pausing for a moment at this point, have we not almost the best evidence we could possibly have of the value of the second Gospel in the freedom with which it was used as a source of information by the writers of the first and third Gospels? The substance of approximately two-thirds of *St. Mark* is reproduced in both *St. Matthew* and *St. Luke*, and the remaining one-third, except for thirty verses, is reproduced in one or other of them. *St. Mark*, therefore, in its present form, or in a form not greatly varying from it, is, almost self-evidently, one chief source for the other two Gospels.

With regard to the sources of *St. Mark* itself, there is not perfect agreement concerning the extent to which its author was indebted to St. Peter. Harnack thinks it quite possible to overestimate this indebtedness; though we may "un-

reservedly accept the tradition that having accompanied St. Paul at Rome he also acted as interpreter to St. Peter." ⁶⁴

The position is full of interest. St. Mark may be taken to have been a young man at the time of Christ's crucifixion. With great probability he is identified with the young man who followed the small band into the garden of Gethsemane (St. Mark xiv. 51). He may, therefore, have reported from his own observation the scenes of Christ's agony and of the disciples' sleeping on their watch. In support of this, note the use of the Aramaic word, *Abba*, in verse 36. If St. Mark first associated himself with the events of the Great Story at this moment of climax, it was not very much that he could write from his own knowledge. Yet, the facts of his home being in Jerusalem and of his mother being an early follower of Christ (Acts xii. 12); his subsequent companionship with St. Paul and St. Barnabas; his renewed and intimate association with St. Paul at Rome; his acting as translator to St. Peter, and, perhaps, also as expounder after St. Peter had delivered his addresses,—are all facts tending to fit him for the work of collating materials for a life of Christ, when the need for a written record of Christ's life and work became clear. These same facts also go far to guarantee the trustworthiness of his account, and to justify St. Luke and the final author or editor of *St. Matthew* in using his Gospel as a primary source of information.

Whence, then, come the accounts of the sayings of Jesus which we find in *St. Matthew* and *St. Luke*, but do not find in *St. Mark*? When the first and third Gospels are compared from the point of view of the passages not traceable to *St. Mark*—for the most part, parables and sayings and discourses of Jesus—there is again a very considerable resemblance. The resemblance extends not only to the actual sayings but to the order in which they occur in the two Gospels,—though in each case with variations which negative the thought that either is borrowing directly from

the other. As before, the natural inference is a common written source, Aramaic, or Greek, or both. And it is again from Papias that information comes. He is quoted by Eusebius as saying that "Matthew, in the Hebrew dialect, compiled the *Logia*"—the words (this is usually taken to mean) or sayings of Christ.

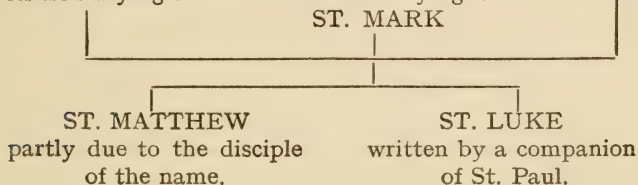
The inferred source for the sayings found in common in St. Matthew and St. Luke and this document mentioned by Papias might, however, be different writings. Moreover, views differ considerably regarding the nature and contents of the *Logia*. Hence, to avoid begging the question, the inferred document is commonly referred to by the capital letter Q (German *Quelle*, meaning "source"). The ordinary solution is, nevertheless, to identify the common source with the *Logia* of St. Matthew. There was no one amongst the disciples more likely than St. Matthew, from his earlier occupation, to have been accustomed to writing. Indeed, as reasons will be quoted later for suggesting, he may even have taken notes of Christ's teaching during His lifetime. And, if not earlier, how likely, when Gentile churches were already established and when the end of the trial of the Apostle to the Gentiles was approaching, that he should put these notes in order and translate them, or have them translated, into Greek! This would afford sufficient reason for attaching St. Matthew's name to the first Gospel. The *Logia* would be its groundwork, the final writer or editor working in with the sayings the substance of the whole of the second Gospel excepting about fifty-five verses, along with some traditional material.

St. Luke, the accredited author of the Gospel which bears his name, apparently had various writings either before him or in his mind; "many," he says, having "taken in hand to draw up a narrative (R.V.) concerning those things which have been fulfilled [or 'fully established'] among us." Manifestly, he too used a collection or collec-

tions of sayings. Resemblances point, as we have said, to his having used the same collection as that used in *St. Matthew*. But such rich material as is contained in *St. Luke* x.—the mission of the seventy, the parable of the Good Samaritan, the incident of the sisters at Bethany, and in *St. Luke* xv.—the parables of the lost piece of silver and of the Prodigal Son, prove the use by the third evangelist of other sources of his own. He must have “had access to a considerable body of authentic reminiscences which should,” to quote the opinion of Dr. Peake, “be placed on almost if not quite as high a level of historicity as *St. Mark* and *Q*.”⁶⁵ Some of the sources on which *St. Luke* depended differed considerably from those which were used in the first Gospel. This is very marked in the records of the Nativity. The two accounts are manifestly written from different standpoints; *St. Matthew*’s version being, it is suggested, more like an account which might have originated with Joseph, whereas *St. Luke*’s must almost certainly have come, directly or indirectly, from our Lord’s mother herself.

The most generally accepted solution may be shown as follows :—

A record, probably by <i>St. Matthew</i> , of Christ’s sayings.	St. Mark’s notes of <i>St. Peter</i> ’s preaching, with some tradi- tion and sayings :	Varying traditions.
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Avoiding many of the side issues of less relative importance to which the whole problem gives rise, as, for example, that *St. Mark* may have used *Q*, or that the *Logia* may have been a complete Gospel, we shall examine briefly in

the next chapter some of the grounds on which the general conclusions above noted rest. The questions surrounding authorship, dates of writing, historical exactitude, of the books of the New Testament are legion. Questions confront us also in conversation, in the daily press, and in our own thinking. We naturally welcome some little insight into the kind of setting that belongs to the problems, and a glimpse of the paths along which answers must finally come.

CHAPTER VI

The Historical Groundwork in the New Testament

II. THE GOSPELS—*continued*

“Matthew for his part published also a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own language, whilst Peter and Paul were at Rome, preaching, and laying the foundation of the Church. And after their departure, Mark, Peter’s disciple and interpreter, did himself also publish unto us in writing the things which were preached by Peter. And Luke, too, the attendant of Paul, set down in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord who also leaned on His breast,—he, again, put forth his Gospel, while he abode in Ephesus in Asia.”

IRENÆUS (Keble’s translation).⁶⁶

THE evidence of second-century writers goes to show that, at the latest, between A.D. 150 and 170 the New Testament, very much as we now have it, was becoming recognised as authoritative. In proof of this, there was a Latin translation made before A.D. 170 which contained the four Gospels, the Acts, the thirteen Epistles ascribed to St. Paul, the three Epistles of St. John, the first Epistle of St. Peter, the Epistle of St. Jude, and the Apocalypse. To these the anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews was soon afterwards added. So well established were the Gospels that about A.D. 170 Tatian prepared a “Harmony” or unified Gospel as it came “through the four” (*Diatessaron*).

General Trustworthiness of the Gospels

Confining ourselves for the moment to the Gospels, and to the question of their origin and historical value, three

bishops of the early church give us valuable information. Their information is the more valuable in that, whether quoting from tradition or from lost writings, they give the authority on which it rests. One of these was Papias, quoted by the historian, Eusebius. He, we have seen, tells us that St. Mark had put in writing the substance of St. Peter's preaching, and that St. Matthew compiled the *Logia*. Papias was bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia in the first half of the second century, and tradition says of him that he had himself heard the apostle John. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, about half a century later, had been a disciple of Polycarp, who was an intimate friend of the apostle John. It is his testimony that is quoted at the head of this chapter. A third is Eusebius, who was bishop of Cæsarea at the end of the third and beginning of the fourth centuries. He not only quotes Papias, but himself contributes a statement concerning St. Matthew to the effect that he "wishing, after having begun by preaching to the Jews, to go and preach also to other nations, put his gospel into writing, in the language of the fathers" (*i.e.*, in Hebrew).⁶⁷

Statements like these are valuable. But, valuable though they are, they are not infallible; and we still have to ask on what grounds, as judged by modern standards, the Gospels, and especially their two chief sources, *St. Mark* and the *Logia* or *Q*, may be accepted as good history.

Any clear reflection of the conditions of life in Palestine during the first half of the first century would at once tell in favour of the trustworthiness of the narratives. Professor Burkitt, of Cambridge, in an accessible little book, *The Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus*, proposes a threefold test: the evangelists' familiarity with the geography of Palestine, with the Jewish language, and with Jewish thought. The Gospels are generally correct in their *geography*. Most of the places named in them have either been identified and their sites are known, or they are mentioned in other Jewish writings. Even names of places

not mentioned in the Old Testament, such as Chorazin and Capernaum, are found in the Jewish Talmud. (As might be expected, a writer like St. Luke, who knew Asia Minor and the sea at first hand and concerning them writes "correctly enough for a guide-book," is less accurate when writing of Palestine, regarding which he is "merely well read.") With respect to familiarity with the *Jewish language*, we have noticed the presence of Aramaic words in the Gospels, more particularly in *St. Mark*. A further example is the emphatic *Amen* at the beginning of many of our Lord's sayings, which is translated "Verily." And, besides these actual words, there are modes of expression which betray an Aramaic origin. Moreover, quotations from the Old Testament suggest familiarity with the Hebrew or the Aramaic version. "There is nothing to suggest" that our Lord and His first disciples were acquainted with the current Greek version, the Septuagint. (St. Luke, as a Greek, naturally uses the Septuagint version; yet even he gives on one occasion at least (xxii. 37) a report of a quotation by Christ from the Old Testament, not as it stands in the Septuagint but as it stands in the Hebrew; a sure token of a "faithful reminiscence of our Lord's words.") As for *Jewish thought*, the Gospels are steeped in it. It is the background of the whole story. Allowing for a certain amount of Greek thought in the fourth Gospel, all the main ideas and phrases "have their explanation and illustration from contemporary Judaism." So far as the thought goes, the first three Gospels "might be translations from the Aramaic." ⁶⁸

These are general conditions of historical trustworthiness to which the Gospels as a whole conform. The next step is to study, as far as the facts and so brief a survey permit, the two chief sources, *St. Mark* and Q.

HISTORICAL VALUE OF ST. MARK

Evidently, very much is gained if we can accept *St. Mark* as in the main good history. The more so, as the Gospels

naturally tended to be expositions and defences of the faith rather than pure historical records. *St. Matthew* is an appeal to the Jews to see in Jesus the promised Messiah. *St. Luke* is addressed to Gentile readers to show that salvation through Christ is offered equally to them. Good history these Gospels assuredly contain. Yet, in face of the ulterior purposes with which they were written, it is well that we are able to fall back upon the shorter record of *St. Mark*, which in plain, unstudied fashion, aims simply to give an outline of the story: salient facts as they were gathered, partly from his own knowledge, partly from his companionships with others, especially with *St. Peter*.

No one reading the Gospel narratives would for a moment imagine that the disciples' experiences of companionship with Christ would be written down by any of them in the form of a diary. It was too absorbing, at times too mystifying and perplexing, for that. Surprising events, profound impressions, their own inward reasonings, would of their own accord stand out in their memory. These things they would most surely relate in their preaching and teaching. The fact, therefore, that in *St. Mark* up to VIII. 27* we have not much more than a collection of "scenes from the ministry of Jesus," should not be astonishing. Nor is it altogether loss. We are the more assured with regard to the historical reality of these unforgettable things than if all were woven together in the form of a studied treatise. No doubt, a definite order and a sense of continuity would be gratifying to the scientific historian. But a descriptive—almost excited—telling counts for no less, perhaps even counts for more, as presenting in a con-

* "From the time of Peter's confession in the country of Cæsarea Philippi we get a real sequence of events, though the sequence is not without gaps. For the week's stay in (or rather, near) Jerusalem at the Passover, we have a chronological scheme that" [allowing for the reckoning of the Last Supper as a Paschal Meal] "may be accepted as historical."—Burkitt: *Earliest Sources*, page 93.

See also Appendix D, Note B, *re St. Mark's history*; pages 145-146.

vincing way the essentials which must enter into any one's picture of Jesus Christ, as Healer and Teacher and Saviour of men.

(a) *Does St. Mark suggest an Eyewitness like St. Peter ?*

If St. Mark derived the substance of his Gospel, apart from what he owed to his own observation, from St. Peter, his claim to credence is, of course, undeniable. And the claim on this score is strengthened, if there are internal evidences of the probable connection of the Gospel with St. Peter. There seem to be such evidences. Certain things reflecting personal honour upon St. Peter are omitted. There is no mention of Christ's words of praise recorded in St. Matthew xvi. Nor are we told that it was he who drew the sword in his Master's defence, St. John only telling this (xviii. 10). Again, in connection with the use of Aramaic expressions, it is noticeable that one of these, *Talitha cumi*, was used when Jesus had allowed no one to be with Him, "save Peter, and James, and John." And, further, even a slight knowledge of the psychology of temperament suggests that an eyewitness of the alert practical temper of St. Peter, a man who was closely studying his Leader and who was the first to utter the conclusion to which he and the rest of the disciples had come (viii. 29), would be likely to note with exactness processes, movement, expressions. We have signs of this in St. Mark i. 31, 41; indeed, in the tense study of movement and behaviour throughout the whole of this first chapter. We find it also in such passages as the following:—iii. 5, "When He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, He saith"; v. 30, "And straightway Jesus, perceiving in Himself that the power proceeding from Him had gone forth, turned Him about in the crowd, and said"; v. 40, "And they laughed Him to scorn. But He, having put them all forth, taketh the father of the child and her mother"; vii. 33, "And He took him aside from the

multitude privately, and put His fingers into his ears " (*cf.* VIII. 23, " And He took hold of the blind man by the hand, and brought him out of the village "); VIII. 12, " And He sighed deeply in His spirit and saith " ; x. 32, " And they were in the way, going up to Jerusalem ; and Jesus was going before them : and they were amazed ; and they that followed were afraid. And He took again the twelve " ; XI. 11, " And He entered into Jerusalem, into the temple ; and when He had looked round about on all things, it being now eventide, He went out to Bethany with the twelve " ; and XI. 16, " And He would not suffer that any man should carry a vessel through the temple." Other passages might be cited (*e.g.*, VII. 17, IX. 27, X. 16, X. 17 (R.V.), X. 23, 27, XII. 41, and XIII. 3) showing the way in which a man of active, eager temper would describe what he had seen. Similarly, a man of St. Peter's temperament would have an eye for deeds rather than for words, and for words as belonging to and part of the deeds ; an eye also for personality, as in Christ's being " moved with compassion " (I. 41), in His deliberately taking the learner's point of view (IV. 11, 33, 34), in His quick word of encouragement, " not heeding the word spoken, Jesus saith, Fear not " (v. 36), His power to draw a crowd (VII. 14), the strength of spirit that rose above His need for rest (VII. 24, etc.), and His courage (X. 32-34, 45, XI. 15, XIV. 27, 28). The constant noting of *the effect* of what Christ did and said is part of this same mental attitude. Of this there are many examples ; as in St. Mark I. 22, 24, 27, 33, 37, 45, II. 6-8, 12, 16, 18, 24, III. 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 21, 22 ; and so on, especially such examples as " they (the disciples) feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this ? " (IV. 41) ; " he that had been possessed with devils besought Him that he might be with Him " (v. 18) ; " many hearing Him were astonished, saying, Whence hath this man these things ? . . . Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Simon ? . . . And they were offended in Him " (vi. 2, 3) ; " the people knew

Him, and ran round about that whole region, and began to carry about on their beds those that were sick, where they heard He was. And wheresoever He entered, into villages, or into cities, or into the country, they laid the sick in the market-places, and besought Him that they might touch if it were but the border of His garment " (VI. 54-56); " And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well " (VII. 37); " And straightway all the multitude, when they saw Him, were greatly amazed, and running to Him saluted Him " (IX. 15); X. 32 (quoted above); " And the chief priests and the scribes . . . sought how they might destroy Him : for they feared Him, for all the multitude was astonished at His teaching " (XI. 18).

All this is characteristic of St. Peter, and supports the acceptance of the second Gospel as to a large extent a reflex of his mind and preaching. To say this is not to overlook the presence of similar features in the first and the third Gospels. But a careful comparison of the instances will show them to be in a special degree a characteristic of *St. Mark*. They give this Gospel the vigour and first-hand vividness which would follow from its author's direct indebtedness to St. Peter. This indebtedness once admitted it would be difficult to obtain stronger proof of the historical value of any writing.

(b) *Is there Evidence of Trustworthiness in the Character of the Writing ?*

Seeing that *St. Mark* is the key Gospel, we can scarcely inquire too closely into its historical worth and reliability. Within itself as a document, as Burkitt, to whose study of this Gospel all are under obligation, shows, *St. Mark* possesses three signs of trustworthiness. It is self-consistent ; it agrees with what we otherwise know of the social and political life of the time ; and it aims solely at narrative unbiased by secondary considerations. Side by side with this are the two important conclusions of

nineteenth-century criticism : that *St. Mark* was known to the writers of the first and third Gospels in the same condition as we now have it, both in text and contents ; and that, apart from minor changes, we have the work very much as it left the author's hand.⁶⁹

May we not ask further : Does the literary character of this Gospel itself throw any light upon its credibility ? Almost certainly it does. The dissatisfaction that we spoke of in the first chapter as having been felt with *St. Mark's* portraiture of Christ rests upon grounds which tell in favour of that portraiture, so far as it goes. The sheer facts are, as it were, flung at us with but little preface or explanation. May not this have been just the way in which Christ Himself, in the might of His spirit and the wondrousness of His personality, actually broke in upon the consciousness of a man of rugged soul like *St. Peter* ? By the direct force of His transcendent deeds, of His self-control, of His control of others, the truth came crashing in that this is the Great One indeed, the nation's—nay, the world's—Leader and Saviour. Illustrations already used point to this. "Straightway they forsook their nets" ; "straightway He called them, and they went after Him" ; "and they were all amazed" ; "and all the city was gathered together at the door" ; "and, rising up a great while before day, He departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" ; "and He preached and cast out devils" ; "but He was without in desert places ; and they came to Him from every quarter." These are snatches from the history as given in a single chapter. An onrush of Divine power tempered by Divine calm ! "A stormy and mysterious Personage" ! This is the Jesus of *St. Mark*.

Was ever so much convincing history crowded into such small compass without losing its vividness as that which we have in the first chapter just quoted, or in the tenth chapter of this Gospel ? It is more even than history. It is history with its background ; history which by the

very matter it contains interprets itself in the telling ; impressive beyond words. It carries us back not only to " the soil of Palestine," but with self-interpreting directness to Him who in a wondrous thirty years' journey trod that soil from Nazareth to Calvary, and in so doing set up between Himself and the whole world a contact which endures for all time. The incompleteness of the record as this Gospel gives it belongs to its very conception of its Central Figure. " The subject and the Preacher are one." ⁷⁰ No description is possible. No portraiture can be complete. The utmost that this writer, brought in his youth under the spell of the Master's spirit as he witnessed the triumphs of Gethsemane and Calvary, can attempt is—to point to Him in action, and let men see for themselves. When we ask him why he omitted so much ; why he said so little about what Christ taught ; the answer is, if one may put the words upon his lips : " This is the Jesus whom Peter saw ; the Jesus in whom he saw the Christ ; the Jesus I have heard him preach."

Is it not just what we should expect the preaching of St. Peter to be ? Christ was not to him an ethical teacher, a social reformer. He was a Divine Personality, " the Son of the Living God." The light that filled his soul, the gospel he had to declare, centred there. There : and in Christ's great march to Jerusalem, and, through the scenes that followed, to His death ! And these are for the writer of this Gospel the two outstanding conceptions of Christ—outwardly conflicting but spiritually harmonised : His Divine Personality ; and His becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. To round off these conceptions when they first flashed in upon man's thought, above all upon the mind of a man like St. Peter, into a treatise would have been almost to belie their character as fresh, arresting conceptions of Divine Reality as it was manifested in Jesus. One would be half sorry for the companion of St. Peter, especially one who himself had witnessed the last great scenes, who could sit down and

write a balanced treatise on this theme. Do we not, on the contrary, see something of true greatness in this disciple, John Mark (of whom 2 Timothy represents St. Paul as saying, "he is profitable to me for the ministry") in his incapacity to do other than he did? That first chapter of his, and in only a slightly less degree the tenth, almost take one's breath; not to speak of the rending tragedy of the fifteenth chapter. Paulinism, we are further told, is "supremely manifest in this evangelist's whole conception of what constitutes the apostolic message." * Still the greater he, who could blend in his own vivid conception a reflex of the spirit of the two greatest apostolic figures, St. Peter and St. Paul!

Is this direct or indirect testimony to the historical value of the Gospel? One thinks, direct. Is it not catching something of its own vision and meaning? And was not that what the Gospel was written for? To be a medium, a channel; to pass on its own inspiration!

There are minor historical errors. The high-priest at the time when David ate the shew-bread was not Abiathar (II. 26) but Abiathar's father. "The Pharisees and all the Jews" † apparently did not perform certain hand-washings regularly, but (it is said) only those of priestly descent, as St. Mark's cousin, the Levite Barnabas, may have been seen by St. Mark to do. But, if St. Mark was a young man of adventurous spirit at the time that he first took a deep personal interest in the Divine Leader who had captivated his spirit and won his allegiance, he may not have been keen about these niceties of old-time story and traditional

* In *Is Mark a Roman Gospel* (page 66) B. W. Bacon notes, as an instance of this, the coincidence between St. Mark VII. 7-9, 13, X. 9, and Colossians II. 20-23 regarding the man-made nature of Mosaic observances and their traditional outgrowths. In *Jesus or Christ* (Hibbert *Journal Supplement* for 1909, page 213) the same writer says, "Mark is a thoroughly Pauline Gospel"; noting especially the subordinating of the precepts of Jesus to His person and work as the Son of God with power.

† VII. 3.

observance. There is an apparent error, too, in the words "On the first day of the unleavened bread, when they used to sacrifice the passover." This, and the difficulty which arises from St. Mark's apparent identifying of the Last Supper with the Passover meal are touched upon elsewhere.⁷¹

Commenting on these difficulties somewhat fully, Burkitt sums up by saying that there is no valid reason to doubt that St. Mark derived much of his material from what St. Peter told him,* and that the general result of the study of his Gospel is to emphasise its "supreme historical importance."⁷²

RECORDED SAYINGS OF JESUS

For the collected sayings of Jesus which seem to have been used by the first and third Evangelists we do not possess the original document as we do in the case of *St. Mark*. There are a few scholars who go so far as to doubt their use *in common* of a second written source. In this brief review, however, our purpose is to keep to the more beaten tracks, and to see a reason for following them. We are the more justified in this when we note that it is the common source, rather than the fact of there being a source or sources, that is questioned.

Supposing—though it cannot be spoken of as certain—that the collection of sayings, generally regarded as made use of by St. Luke and the compiler of *St. Matthew*, contained comparatively little narrative, it and *St. Mark* would be mutually supplementary. Written in the first instance for Palestinian readers, references to the story of the life of Christ would not be necessary in a collection

* With considerable insight Professor Bacon puts St. Mark's association with St. Peter between the breach with St. Paul at Antioch (whither we know from Galatians II. 11 that St. Peter went) and the journey to Cyprus with Barnabas. But this does not preclude a second association between them at Rome. "That the two were associated together in work at Rome may be accepted as a matter beyond reasonable doubt," says Canon Robinson in *The Christ of the Gospels* (pages 30, 38, 39). And see page 89.

of sayings (the *Logia* or *Q*). The main facts concerning Jesus were well known in Palestine. But His teaching was more likely to be forgotten. Hence a written collection of Christ's sayings was a "perfectly intelligible supplement" to the spoken tradition. This is well argued by Canon H. B. Streeter in *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, who, with most, treats *Q* as a record of sayings rather than as a complete Gospel. "Within a dozen years after the event," says this writer, "something of the kind would be needed. It is not intelligible as a document thirty or forty years later, when the events were a generation old. . . . This original collection," he concludes, "was probably written twenty years before St. Mark wrote, and may even have reached Rome before him."⁷³ *St. Mark*, on the other hand, is written for a different class of readers. "We are no longer in Palestine." In Rome the general public has never heard of Jesus. Here it is a biography that is wanted. And in a series of clear-cut vignettes, the writer of the second Gospel presents the life and deeds and animating purpose of Jesus Christ.* This is one of the

* Many details in St. Mark's Gospel suggest that he is writing for Gentile, and specifically for Roman, readers. The explaining of Jewish customs and the translating of the Aramaic expressions, *Ephphatha*, etc., suggest the Gentile reader, Roman or other. But the explaining of Greek words; the giving Latin equivalents (e.g., two mites being a Roman *quadrans* or "farthing"); and the use of actual Latin words spelt in Greek characters, show that he had Roman readers in view. The tradition to this effect can be traced back as far as A.D. 150, says Bacon in *Is Mark a Roman Gospel?* Again, when it is pointed out (see page 83) that the apparent identifying of the first day of unleavened bread with the day of the sacrificing of the Passover (xiv. 12) is an error of which no Jewish writer (remembering the clear instructions of Leviticus xxiii. 5, 6) could be expected to be guilty, a plausible answer is that the Roman reckoning of the day differed from the Jewish, as ours does; and that by the Roman (and our) reckoning of the day from midnight to midnight, *instead of from sunset to sunset*, the first day of unleavened bread actually does fall on the day of the sacrificing of the Passover. Writing for Romans, St. Mark might, perhaps naturally would, write in terms of their measurement of the day, not of the Jewish. But, further, in a section of the Priestly Code contained in Exodus xii. 1-20 there appears to be a kind of precedent for St. Mark's expression. In verse 6 we read that the Passover lamb

possible reconstructions of the story of the writing of *St. Mark* and *Q*.

The usual view is that at some time St. Matthew probably made a collection of our Lord's sayings, with a sufficient account of the occasions on which they were spoken to give them their needful setting. At some later date, either before or not long after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the compiler of the first Gospel used this collection together with St. Mark's Gospel and a certain amount of traditional material, and so gave us our *St. Matthew*.*

was to be kept till the fourteenth day of the first month, and slain at even. In verse 18: "On the fourteenth day of the month at even ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even." In view of this similar identification, is not St. Mark relieved of much of the responsibility? Indeed, some experts on the Old Testament and in the knowledge of Jewish customs entirely exonerate St. Mark from inaccuracy in this particular.

For references on the Palestinian character of *Q*, see Note 73. Also, as the word occurs in one or two titles and in one or two quotations, it is necessary to explain that the word "Synoptic" applies to the three, more or less parallel, first Gospels.

* Some readers may have heard of the finding in 1897, in a rubbish heap on the site of the ancient city of Oxyrhynchus, 120 miles south of Cairo, of a leaf of a papyrus book containing what were at first called *Logia Jesu* (Sayings of Jesus); and later, in 1903, at the same place, of a second papyrus fragment also containing sayings of Jesus. The writing of these is dated in the third century, most likely the earlier half. Amongst the best known of these new sayings are: "Jesus saith, I stood in the midst of the world, and in the flesh was I seen of them; and I found all men drunken, and none found I athirst among them. And my soul grieveth over the sons of men, because they are blind in their heart," etc.; and "Jesus saith, Wherever there are (two, they are not without) God, and where there is (one) alone (I say) I am with him. Lift up the stone and there thou shalt find me; Cleave the wood, and there am I." The translations of these two sayings by Dean Stubbs in *Verba Christi* in the Temple Classics, by Dr. Taylor in *The Oxyrhynchus Sayings of Jesus* (Clarendon Press), and by Evelyn White in his detailed study of the fragments (*The Sayings of Jesus*: Cambridge University Press) are practically identical, the simple Greek permitting of little variation. These fragments are evidently portions of a fairly large collection of the Sayings of Christ.

But these collected sayings are not the *Logia* referred to in the text. Evelyn White shows that these sayings are almost certainly in part *based on the Gospels*; and are, therefore, not the source of the words of Christ as recorded in the Gospels.

We have yet to ask how far it is probable that a collection of the sayings written from memory would give us at all accurately what Jesus said ; not to the letter, but in substance, and sometimes to the actual letter. To this, over and above the probability of many of the teachings being often repeated, there is perhaps no better answer than that of Strauss, certainly not an uncritical witness, that " the discourses of Jesus, like fragments of granite, could not be dissolved by the flood of oral tradition " ; though, as he goes on to say, in the actual writing of the Gospels " they were not seldom torn from their original position and deposited in places to which they did not properly belong." ⁷⁴ Is there, to take an oft-used example, need for external proofs that the words in St. Matthew xi. 28-30, beginning " Come unto Me," were spoken by Jesus ? " There was no second Christ to speak those words." At times, too, an unwelcome and unexpected note was struck, as when Christ spoke of the sufferings and death which He knew awaited Him. Such words would arrest the hearer's attention and fix themselves in the memory. All this applies, on the supposition of a considerable period elapsing between the speaking and the writing. But to this Sir W. M. Ramsay puts forward a highly interesting alternative, which, coming from such a pen, demands consideration, and which, could it be proved, would, even more perfectly than Canon Streeter's view, secure the approximation of the reported sayings to Christ's actual words. Sir W. M. Ramsay's view is that they were written by St. Matthew during Christ's lifetime. The importance of this suggestion and the interesting nature of the reasons urged in its support justify a moment's attention. The force of the argument lies in the fact that the sayings—for example, the Sermon on the Mount—are entirely uncoloured by what, after Christ's death, became the central thought and teaching of the apostles, namely, the sacrificial purpose and meaning of the Cross. Had they been written after the Crucifixion

they could hardly, it is thought, have retained so absolutely their first simplicity, escaping the least intermingling of the more dynamic, and afterwards more emphasised, doctrines of faith as the way of life and of salvation through the death of Christ. Not that there is anything out of harmony between the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount and other sayings, and the final sacrifice. Christ's teachings, equally with His deeds, reveal His personality. And throughout all time, as Ramsay says in agreement with Harnack, the portrait of Jesus as given in the sayings has remained in the foreground. ⁷⁵

Though there can be no two opinions as to the interest attaching to Ramsay's suggestion, the date generally assigned to the writing of the *Sayings* is somewhere in the sixties of the first century. It will be seen a little later that it is not impossible to harmonise the two views. The making of notes during Christ's lifetime, or at some intermediate date, is in no way incompatible with the writing up of these notes some years afterwards for the purposes of a permanent record.

Difficulties necessarily Remaining

Yet, when all is said, we have to face the fact of discrepancies in points of detail in the New Testament; though in a far less degree than in the Old. Some of the difficulties, as will be shown in commenting on St. Luke II. 2 in the next chapter, belong to our ignorance which further knowledge dispels. A habit amongst scholars of not coming too readily to negative conclusions, but waiting for further light, is illustrated elsewhere. ⁷⁶ Some difficulties, however, are actually there. Neither in literary style nor in subject-matter were the writers miraculously overruled. As men, they were inspired to do their task. They wrote—as the effect of their writings itself is proof—under a deep sense of the sacredness of the work which by Divine call had fallen to their hands. But, as has been said of the Old Testament, that in making the prophet God did

not unmake the man ; so also is it with the writers of the Gospels. " No inspiration intervened to make the rugged sentences of Mark flow with the eloquent and finished style of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The stamp of human individuality was on each line ; and for all that we can prove to the contrary it was a humanity capable of making mistakes as humanity has always been. Am I wrong in pleading," said the late Hope Moulton, " that if it had not been so capable it would not have spoken our human language at all ? " 77

The Felt Need for Literary Foundations

Can we in any way reconstruct in imagination the hour that gave birth to the idea of a written Gospel, and the group of men in whose minds the thought arose ? If ever in the world's history there was a moment of Inspiration, it was surely when the thought came of a record of the Ministry of Jesus Christ in the form of a written narrative of certain of His deeds and a few examples of His sayings.

The task and the men awaited each other. There was (accepting his identification with the " young man " of St. Mark xiv. 51) St. Mark, interested from his youth—even to the point of venturesome curiosity. He had a knowledge of the two essential languages. There was St. Matthew, also knowing the two languages—as a Jew the Hebrew, and as a public official the Greek—and the likeliest, so far as one can judge, in the band of disciples to have been given to writing. There was St. Luke, the Greek physician, an educated man, with (as his writings show) literary tastes. Is not this, somewhat clearly, one side of the silent and unconscious preparation for this greatest service men have ever been called upon to render to mankind, the writing in language reverent and simple of the Life of Jesus Christ ?

Meanwhile, in another essential direction, and again with entire absence of premeditation, the conditions had been preparing. These it is open to us to picture as

the conditions which led to the call to write. Putting together scattered facts reaching us from various sources, and variously confirmed by recent opinion, one's thought is drawn irresistibly to Rome as having become through St. Paul's detention there (and possibly the presence of St. Peter) a new centre of activity of the growing Church. Urged alike by his own conviction and by Divine intimation (Acts XXIII. 11), St. Paul had made his appeal to Cæsar. There are many tokens in the *Acts*, such as the records of contacts with Roman officials, and the deliberateness with which St. Paul at last claims the right of appeal as a Roman citizen, of St. Paul's and St. Luke's opinion that the law and custom of the empire might be viewed as, on the whole, not unfriendly to the new faith. For them, Rome would be an ideal centre of propaganda. And are not the later persecutions by successive emperors, whose fears were aroused by the strength of the new religion, signs of the correctness of their forecast?

The facts of the case during these early sixties in the first century invite us to picture at the capital of the empire a unique missionary group; not all present throughout, but almost certainly free to communicate and to plan; members of this band of leaders being St. Paul, St. Mark, St. Luke, Silvanus (Silas), and, perhaps, St. Peter.* If thus the scene of momentous activity was changed from Jerusalem to Rome, was there not need that the methods should be to some extent changed also? St. Paul may or may not have been set free for a sufficient period to allow him to make a fourth missionary tour. But, even were this the case, other means, as St. Paul was a sufficiently able missionary strategist to see, must now be adopted to give permanence to the new teaching.† It

* "A not improbable suggestion," says Canon Robinson in *The Christ of the Gospels*, "is that St. Peter went to Rome at the invitation of St. Paul" (page 39). See line 7 overleaf, and, with it, note on page 146.

† Though, as is the case with us all, St. Paul had the present vividly before him in his letter-writing, we gather the impression that he had outgrown whatever expectation he may at one time have entertained

must have a literature. Little enough did St. Paul dream that certain of his own letters to the churches, written, as letters are, to deal with the moment's affairs and interests, would be preserved and would become part of that literature. The first need would be for a record of the Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ. Would there not be ample reason, therefore, for a prompt rallying of the forces for the accomplishment of this purpose? St. Mark and St. Luke, we know, were with St. Paul at certain periods during his imprisonment. That, using information received from St. Peter, St. Mark writes *about* this time is fairly certain on the strength alike of early tradition and of the acceptance of modern scholarship. The only question is just how early he wrote. If he wrote as early as Harnack, Gore, and others think, *i.e.*, about or before A.D. 60, his Gospel would be a first step in the direction of the new plans. But more was needed. Was there any written record, other and earlier, and more reliable than St. Peter's recollections could supply, of the words and teachings of Jesus? As we have already seen, St. Matthew had probably made such a record.* He could be at once communicated with; and asked either to forward his memoranda or, more probably, to write up his memoranda and either to send or bring them for use. Something of this kind is indicated by the statement of Irenæus that St. Matthew published a Hebrew Gospel while St. Paul and St. Peter were at Rome. When these memoranda come—possibly translated by St. Matthew himself into Greek before sending—St. Luke sees the incompleteness of St. Mark's account, however valuable it may be as a reservoir

of an imminent second coming of Christ. [Note, on this point, Professor Andrews' comment that 1 Thessalonians does not state that this is to happen immediately; Peake's *Commentary*, page 877.] As Dr. James Drummond says in *Paul: his Life and Teaching* (page 141): "We are only carrying out Paul's own principles when we say that the second coming will not be 'according to the flesh,' but must be realised in the slow advance of a higher morality and a purer faith in the world."

* If there, St. Peter might recall this. See note, page 99.

of facts, and forthwith plans his Gospel. He has travelled much,—and is free to travel still. For much of his information he is indebted to people whom he has already met. With others he can get into touch. (We have only, by way of further conjecture, to think of Theophilus, to whom St. Luke addresses in a sort of dedication each section of his history, as an influential Roman Christian, in order perhaps to see how funds were provided and facilities obtained.) In some such way it is at least conceivable that the literary foundations of Christianity, as we have them in the first three Gospels, may have been laid. As a possible grouping of events, it implies that the *Acts* and, therefore, *St. Luke* and the earlier *St. Mark*, were written within St. Paul's lifetime.* St. Paul's letters would ere long be valued in a new light, and those that had been so far kept would now be likely to be carefully preserved by the churches possessing them. Thus, in writings filled with the beauty and the truth of the new faith, we should have the beginnings of the New Testament—instrument throughout the ages of Christ's ministry to men.

It need not surprise us that it took two or three generations for Gospels and Epistles to come to be regarded as Scriptures. The Church already had its Bible in the Old Testament. And certainly, the writings of St. Mark, St. Matthew, and St. Luke would not be *issued* as Scripture. As the work of men who were not actual leaders they would make no claim to authority or finality. These facts considered, from fifty to a hundred years might naturally pass before the new writings were ranked with the Old Testament as sacred.

But, invaluable as are the Gospel records of Christ's life, the most that they can give us is a framework, an outline which each new generation fills in for itself. The life of Jesus can never be recorded. "By historical means," said

* For detailed statements, here drawn to a focus, see pages 84, 87, 110-111, 118-119, 139-143, 153; and Appendix D, especially Note B.

Professor Deissmann, lecturing in the spring of 1923 at Birmingham, "we cannot completely penetrate into the . . . greatest inner experiences of Jesus"; adding: "One must render to history the things that are history's, and to love the things that are love's." ⁷⁸

THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Reference to St. Luke as a historian will be made in speaking of the *Acts* in the next chapter. A word or two needs to be said here with regard to the fourth Gospel. On the face of it, *St. John* differs strikingly both in method and in aim from the earlier-written Gospels. Its purpose is interpretation rather than history. It is almost universally agreed that it is a supplementary Gospel, its writer knowing of the other Gospels, and its readers also being assumed to know their contents. In its general portraiture of Christ it is in harmony with *St. Mark*; even though, reading the two Gospels side by side, it may not be possible to harmonise them, detail by detail, as exact history.

These brief indications point to a problem of some difficulty in connection with the fourth Gospel. Concerning its general character there is practical unanimity. As Professor Bacon says: "No discriminating reader can imagine that the fourth evangelist attempts to reproduce the historical utterances of Jesus. They are as freely adapted as those of Socrates in the dialogues of Plato, or the discourses of Peter (in the *Acts*). . . . It (*St. John*) was not written for historical critics, but for disciples who needed a higher interpretation of the divine revelation in the coming of Christ. What the author aimed at he has accomplished. He seeks to convey truth, and not mere fact. . . . He wishes to tell what Christ eternally is to the soul self-dedicated to Him, not what He *was* to past observers." ⁷⁹ Whilst, in a short series of sketches of action and teaching, the Gospel gives a wondrously living picture of Jesus as a man, its real purpose is to show Who

it was that was living that Life ; that it was the Eternal Christ, the Christ of the ages. He was in the world ; but the world knew Him not. So, "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us full of grace and truth ; (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father)."

With regard to the fourth Gospel being supplementary to the other three, it is easy to see how in course of time the feeling might arise that the portrait of Christ was not fully and completely drawn in the earlier Gospels. In them, men accustomed to St. Paul's teaching would fail to find much that was in the very foreground of that Apostle's thought. This also may explain what is often spoken of as the Pauline element in the fourth Gospel. Dr. Bacon, for example, says : " It is Paul who really speaks to us again through the pages of the Fourth Gospel." ⁸⁰ Similarly, Deissmann says : " St. John is the oldest and greatest interpreter of St. Paul." ⁸¹

The question of authorship is much more in debate. There is a general agreement that the Gospel, as it has come down to us, represents the work of more than one writer. Yet, taking the Gospel as a whole, the reader can easily detect signs of a peculiar intimacy of touch and of a direct knowledge, which are the more striking when the general aim and tenor of the Gospel as an interpretation rather than a record is recalled. The author writes interpretively, yet with the historian's touch upon events. This touch is so marked as to find no other explanation than that the report is either directly or indirectly that of an eyewitness. It is seen, for example, in the frequent and graphically descriptive references to the disciples. A single short passage of twelve verses contains three such references. In St. John II. 11 we read : " And His disciples believed on Him," a revealing of their inner life which could not have been imported from outside the circle ; in the next verse there is a full list of those who were companions in the walk from Cana to Capernaum

together with the detail of a short stay there : " After this He went down to Capernaum, He, and His mother, and His brethren, and His disciples ; and there they abode not many days " ; in verse 22 is another revealing of the inner life, of the very *mind*, of the disciples : " When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He spake this." A further strong indication of emanating from one who was familiar with the story of the early church is the accurate knowledge shown of Jerusalem and its life before the fall of the city in A.D. 70,—this Gospel differing from the first three Gospels in that, whereas they treat predominantly of the Galilean ministry, it treats very largely of what happened in Jerusalem and the immediate neighbourhood. A third, though less general, evidence of intimate knowledge, which must impress any reader, is in the fullness of the references to Nicodemus (III. 1-15, VII. 50-52), whose name is not mentioned elsewhere. The part taken by Nicodemus in connection with the burial of Jesus (XIX. 39) would assuredly have brought him into contact with the mother of Jesus, and with the disciple to whose care Jesus Himself entrusted her and who after the Crucifixion took her to his own home.

Without attempting to present a detailed argument, these are indications which justify any one in holding still to the view that in some way we owe the main contents of the fourth Gospel to the disciple John, the son of Zebedee. At points, certainly, the hand of other writers is seen. Chapter XXI. is apparently an appendix by another hand. It distinctly introduces a further writer in the words which seem to point to St. John as the source of the larger part of the Gospel, " we know that his testimony is true."

The Portraiture of Christ

Notwithstanding an unwonted note in some of the " discourses " with the Jews,⁸² a peculiar tenderness attaches to this fourth account of the life and spirit of Jesus Christ. No words from any pen have brought more

comfort to mankind. The human touches are there, bringing near to the heart of the reader the man of Nazareth, who was "wearied with his journey" (rv. 6), and who wept human tears at the grave of his friend; but these human touches are combined with a superhuman majesty and pervading grace. One is reminded of a beautiful story one has heard of an artist who had spent long on a picture containing a representation of Christ as he conceived Him. When the picture was finished he sent for a friend in sympathy with his work to come and see it, before he allowed it to be exhibited in public. The friend came, and stood long before the picture without speaking. "Why do you not speak?" asked the painter. She was still silent; till the artist began to have doubts, and to fear that he had failed. "Why do you not speak?" he again asked anxiously. But the answer that came was: "I was thinking—I was thinking—how much you must have loved Him to have painted Him like that." "Ah!" said the artist with feeling, "but if I had loved Him more, I could have painted Him better." With the fourth Gospel before us, though the work of other hands is to be seen, one is drawn towards the view that here by some means we have a picture of Jesus, the Christ, as it filled the mind and heart of His nearest friend, the disciple whom He loved.

Not that the portrait differs from those of *St. Matthew*, *St. Mark*, and *St. Luke*! It supplements and exceeds. That is all. Diverse in personality and in point of view as their authors are, the four portraiture, each needed for and suited to its own audience in the early Christian Church, give us the same Jesus, the same Christ. This is the marvel. So few strokes from each pen; no descriptive adjectives by the narrators; just an account of word and deed, with here and there an onlooker's comment uttered on the spot: yet the four portraits give us the one Son of Man and Son of God. An argument, surely—were it needed—for the historical reality of the Life that lies behind them!

No paragraph can convey an impression of that Life.

The heart has its own picture of Him. Using the few clear outlines drawn for us by evangelist and apostle and seer, we, too, see Him in the wonder of His gentleness, the wonder of His strength, and, after the Ascension, in the wonder of His glory. In simplest outline, the Gospels give us glimpses of His life amongst men as the Infinitely tender, the Infinitely strong. He healed men, one by one, with a compassion which was like the love of Heaven itself bending down to reach that one heart's need ; He saw children in their mother's arms who wanted to go to Him as to a chosen friend, and said, " Oh ! let them come to Me, for of such is the Kingdom of God " ; He spent whole nights in prayer ; He was seen at times in something of the splendour which He had laid aside in order to dwell among men, as on the Mount of Transfiguration, and, perhaps, by John the Baptist at the moment of His baptism, and, certainly, in His appearances after the resurrection ; He stood amongst men and said : " Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest " ; He spake, as no man ever spake, of the prodigal and of the Father's love, and of the joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth ; in His own life before men He " wrought with human hands the creed of creeds " ; and—*He was crucified !*

But, He rose again ! To this the New Testament itself is the surest testimony. Had not that Story ended in triumph, it would never have been written. St. Paul's certainty of the Resurrection was the groundwork of his faith and the impelling motive of his life. In this he is typical of all who wrote the record or whose labours are recorded.

The Records of Miracles

To many the chief difficulty besetting the Gospel story and its acceptability as history is in the miracles. How far this is to remain a stumbling-block will depend mainly upon three things : interpretation, evidence, and the reader's individual temperament. Some will come to a

revelation of the Divine *expecting* higher or super-normal happenings. Even interpretation and evidence will be coloured by the mental predisposition of the man to whom they are offered. The prevailing mental attitude of the times one lives in also affects the approach to such questions. Thus the writer of the statements: "The first century could find nothing real and true that was not accompanied by the marvellous and the 'super-natural.' The nineteenth century could find nothing real and true that was"; follows with the questions, "Which view was right and which wrong?"—and, seeing right and wrong in both views, according to the way in which they are regarded, and seeing completeness in neither, finally replies, "I cannot say. Consult the men of the twentieth century. I was trained in the nineteenth, and cannot see clearly."⁸³

With regard to the records of miracle, the super-natural is not by any means the non-natural. The present-day tendency is to use the word very much as the word "super-man" has come to be used—that is, to denote a higher phase of the same thing, rather than that which contradicts or supersedes. To deny the possibility of the super-natural in this sense of super-normal—which is probably the full extent of the meaning that the word "miracle" will bear—would be to assume that we had taken the full measure of man and of the universe, and that in what we regard as the reign of law (*i.e.*, up-to-date discovered law) we have ascertained the limitations of God Himself.

Let us grant, as we readily may, that a present-day scientist or historian, a "trained spectator," would often describe the miracles of the Bible in other words than those in which they are there described. Describing things in a new way is only what is always being done in matters of human knowledge. But, granting this, we are not therefore compelled to look back on all miracles as peculiarly described events, recorded as having happened in a long dead past, and out of relation to present-day possibilities. Miracle has been well defined as "reality breaking through."

And no twentieth-century thinker would assert that the full reality concerning man or concerning the resources of the universe is known to us. On the contrary, we are full of the belief that there are unprobed and hitherto unsuspected powers in man of which we speak, in part, as his "sub-conscious life." As for the universe outside of man, Sir William Crookes said thirty years ago, when the belief seems to have been somewhat general that scientific discovery was reaching its limits, "Science should disdain the notion of finality." With unexplored powers within us and undiscovered marvels about us, it is a strange logic that can deny the possibility of miracle. There is no doctrine of uniformity in nature to assert that everything will continue to happen according to the laws of science as we now apprehend them. "Miracles do not happen." True, they do not, in the sense of the unaccounted for and the unaccountable. But if, as such careful philosophers as J. S. Mackenzie and Herbert Spencer tell us, "the infinite side belongs to us as truly as the finite side," and "the I which continuously survives" and is the subject of our various experiences is a "portion of the Unknowable Power,"^{83a} then, on man's side, the unexpected, even the startling, may conceivably happen at any moment when the call or provocation and the conditions are adequate. Whether it be ourselves or the universe, an infinite involution holds within it the promise of an infinite evolution; and flashings forth of inner potency may at any time occur.

And what if the Bible be actually, as, by taking it on its own terms, we appear to be finding it to be—a product and a record of a progressive blending of the Divine Spirit with the human spirit, and of the progressive indwelling of the Divine in the human? Will there not inevitably be occasions when reality breaks through, manifesting its onward movement in occurrences of transcending marvel? Interpretation may eliminate the element of miracle in many cases. Evidence may establish the naturalness and normality of events which, heightened by the conditions

under which they occurred, had come to be regarded as super-natural or super-normal. But, when I am face to face with a Personality so inscrutable that reverent scepticism vies with faith in ascribing to Him unique supremacy and spiritual power, in my heart of hearts I expect reality to shine forth in Him and to break forth from Him in ways of surpassing grace and might ; the more so, as the entire drift of New Testament teaching is that, in a universe of energy, God is love.

Note to pages 89-91.—Although tradition somewhat strongly connects St. Peter with Rome, his presence there is in no way essential to the existence of a literary missionary group at that city in the early sixties of the first century. (Dr. Robert Scott in *The Pauline Epistles: A Critical Study*, even tries to show that almost the whole of the New Testament, excepting the Johanne writings, emanates from a strictly Pauline circle. Unusual though many of his suggestions are, the prominence he gives to Silvanus (Silas) accounts for the inclusion of his name in the tentative group of pages 89-91.) The suggestion on these pages of a possible literary group is so made as not to depend upon St. Peter being a member of it. Professor Merrill, of Chicago, has just issued a book of Essays in Early Christian History (1924), in which he argues that evidence is lacking that St. Peter ever saw Rome. This is probably "drastic negative criticism"; and, certainly, general expert opinion is in favour of St. Peter's association with Rome. But until Professor Merrill's arguments are answered, it is well to avoid appearing to assume St. Peter's presence there. (The importance of Antioch in the life of the Church at this period is not, of course, overlooked in fixing attention upon Rome as a centre of literary activity.)

It is not felt at the moment to be necessary to modify (in view of the same writer's criticisms) the statement in the fifth chapter that the New Testament is quoted by early Christian writers, not only of the second and third centuries but (by Clement of Rome) in the first century.

CHAPTER VII

The Historical Groundwork in the New Testament

III. THE ACTS (WITH ST. LUKE)

"St. Paul needs some foundation. What St. Paul is, he is in Christ."

PROFESSOR ADOLF DEISSMANN.⁸⁴

"St. Paul understood what most Christians never realise, namely, that the Gospel of Christ is not *a* religion, but religion itself, in its most universal and deepest significance."

DEAN INGE.⁸⁵

SOME of the most interesting discussions of New Testament literature have arisen regarding the *Acts*. "Not long ago," says Sir W. M. Ramsay, "it was reckoned by many as essential to a respectable scholar that he should pooh-pooh Luke as a second-century writer."⁸⁶ But, since this opinion emanated from the famous Tübingen School of critics some eighty years ago, archæologist, geographer, theologian, historian, have been at work on the ground and in connection with the period covered by St. Paul. Great cities, such as Ephesus, have been explored; routes and sites studied; and the history of Rome and of its methods of colonisation brought to bear. Thousands of inscriptions touching upon almost every subject that ordinary people write about—on stone, papyrus, broken pieces of pottery—have been found and read. In the light of this new knowledge of the peoples amongst whom St. Paul laboured, opinion concerning the trustworthiness of the historian of the third Gospel and the *Acts* has greatly changed. It will be of interest to note some of the chief reasons which

have led to this change of opinion; following Ramsay in places somewhat closely, for it is to him that we owe very largely the breaking up of the ground at this point. It will serve also to illustrate the way in which the New Testament is coming back to us, critically restored; a sample of the many-sided research on which our assurance rests.

*St. Luke's Account of the Missionary Labours and
Travels of St. Paul*

It was whilst holding the belief that the *Acts* was fabricated by a second-century writer that Professor (now Sir) W. M. Ramsay, set out on his historical and geographical studies in Asia Minor, hoping to find some help from it, its data being so considerable. Using the book in this way, he came by degrees to the conclusion that it must have been written in the first century, and with admirable knowledge. And the information, if reliable, being of exceptional value in his research, it became urgently important to him to make sure of the general trustworthiness of its author as a historian. This meant, of course, a further and specialised investigation; with the outcome, in Sir W. M. Ramsay's own words, that "when the *Acts* is read as the real travels of real men along roads and over seas, it becomes vivid in the highest degree," and is "unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness." The proof of this notable statement came by stages. For, there were points on which the *Acts* had been somewhat generally thought to be quite inaccurate; and these had to be dealt with.

The first part of the record to win its way back to credence was that which began with the visit paid by St. Paul to Troas on his second missionary journey (*Acts* xvi.). Here he was—apparently for the first time, though this is by no means certain—joined by the author of the *Acts*, who from this point writes frequently in the first person; not obtrusively, but where it would be incorrect

to say " they " if he were of the party.* To the geographer and historian, these sections, implying the writer's personal companionship with the Apostle, were naturally of the most immediate interest, both for the information they gave and for their direct claim to be written by an eye-witness. Moreover, memories of earlier travel would be a topic of conversation as they journeyed—especially in the case of so great a missionary strategist as St. Paul, who, as his letters show, had always an eye upon the field. The whole of the travel-chapters (XIII. to XXI., and XXVII. 1 to XXVIII. 16) of the *Acts*, accordingly, may be regarded as written either from personal observation or from the accounts given to the writer by St. Paul himself.

Ramsay's attention was first caught by the notice given of the crossing of a frontier into Lycaonia in XIV. 6: " They fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia." This was one of the points on which the *Acts* had been thought to be wrong; Iconium, the city which the Apostles had just left, having been thought by modern writers on ancient geography to have been itself a city of Lycaonia. It was a sort of test case. Was St. Luke merely quoting Xenophon, who records the crossing of this boundary by Cyrus about the year 400 B.C.? Or had he actual knowledge of the frontier as it stood in A.D. 47? In the first case, he is using material inventively; in the second case, he is writing history. Ramsay was able to prove that St. Luke's boundaries were true to the period of which he was writing. " Further study of Acts XIII.-XXI.," Ramsay writes, " showed that the book could bear the most minute scrutiny as an

* In one case, at least, where the first person is used the words have a backward reference. Acts xx. 5, " These going before tarried for us at Troas," clearly shows St. Luke to have been already of St. Paul's party, although the third personal pronoun ' he ' had just previously been used. It is, therefore, far from certain (note also Professor Menzies on the *Acts* in Peake's *Commentary*) that the use of the first person indicates either the actual beginning or the full extent of St. Luke's companionship. The record rather indicates that St. Luke at times forgets himself and his own presence altogether in narrating the events.

authority for the facts of the Ægean world. . . . A model of historical statement, marvellously concise and yet marvellously lucid.”⁸⁷ If we accept this verdict upon the travel-story, it is well to remember that—though, as just said, we cannot limit St. Luke’s companionship to the periods described in the first person—not all the contents of these chapters appear as distinctly travel-records; and additions may have been made here and there by other pens.

To the expert geographer’s testimony others are to be added. At one time much was made of the author’s use of medical terms as pointing to “Luke the physician.” More recent criticism has very greatly weakened this argument.* Of more account is the accuracy, from the standpoint of legal procedure, of the report of the prolonged trial (xxi. 27 to xxvi. 32). Also, characterising St. Luke’s entire history, as comprised in the third Gospel and the *Acts*, is an exact knowledge of the system of Roman government and of the nature of the offices held by Rome’s representatives with whom the actors in the story were brought into contact. There is, further, the entire naturalness of the descriptions in the *Acts* of St. Paul’s contacts with people of various types.

One example of the careful use of medical terms which, notwithstanding recent criticism, is worthy of mention, is in the account of the three months spent on the island of Malta after the shipwreck.† Apparently, there were many cases of sickness amongst the islanders in which St. Luke’s professional skill was called for. And he uses a different word for his own treatment of cases from that which he uses for St. Paul’s direct healing. St. Paul “healed”

* See *The Style and Literary Methods of St. Luke*, by H. J. Cadbury (Harvard Theological Studies), 1919; or Goguel’s summary of Cadbury’s “decisive blow” in *Le Livre des Actes* (1922), pages 142–146.

† H. McLachlan, in his incisive study *St. Luke: the Man and his Work* (1920), speaking of St. Luke’s medical cures, adds: “to which one reference at least is made (Acts xxviii. 11).”

(*ἰάσατο*) Publius. Afterwards, others came and "received medical treatment" (*ἐθεραπεύοντο*); in all probability at the hands of St. Luke himself. This difference in the terms used *may* point to the medical man's professional accuracy. In any case, does not the fact that many were medically treated, coupled with the apparent inclusion of the writer in the gratitude shown when they left the island—"who also honoured us with many honours," seem, on the face of it, to point to medical skill on the part of St. Paul's companion, usually so silent about anything that could be honouring to himself?

It is rather fine to think of this medical man, the first medical missionary, devoting himself so absolutely to the Apostle. With him, when Agrippa remanded him to Rome; with him on the eventful journey, as here in ministering to the sick folk at Malta; with him at Rome! And it is he who writes the brief dispassionate history in the *Acts* of his hero's missionary labours.

In an article in the *Homiletical Review* for April 1912, on *St. Luke as a Law Reporter*, the late Dr. F. M. Burdick, Professor of Law in Columbia University, made an interesting comparison between the procedure in public prosecutions in the Roman provinces (as sketched, for example, by Sir James Fitzjames Stephen in his *History of the Criminal Law in England*), and St. Luke's account of the procedure in St. Paul's trial. He took up in turn the description of St. Paul's examination by Lysias, "the chief captain" at Jerusalem, and of his being sent to the governor Felix. The latter, after hearing counsel and the Apostle's opening defence, deferred the hearing of witnesses, and, in the hope of receiving a bribe to set him free, kept St. Paul in bonds as a privileged prisoner for two years. At last Festus, who succeeded Felix, conducted the trial in full court. Witnesses were heard who urged their case with so much personal vehemence that, in order to escape their clutches (xxv. 7-9), the accused claimed his

rights as a Roman citizen and appealed to Cæsar. The right of appeal was allowed. But it was a case of some difficulty. Hence, when King Agrippa came to pay him a complimentary visit, Festus, perplexed at having to remand a prisoner to Rome without being able to specify the charges against him, availed himself, in full accordance with legal precedent, of the opportunity of calling in Agrippa as an official adviser. In the end they were agreed as to St. Paul's innocence.

The interest of all this procedure, and of many intervening details, omitted here, is that an authority on law can speak of the trial as one of the most important criminal trials in history. Nearly one-sixth of the entire book of the Acts is devoted to reporting it (xxi. 27 to xxvi. 32). And every step in its progress, from the arrest to the dramatic and properly timed appeal to Cæsar, is "strictly in accord with the course of criminal procedure in the Roman provinces, as it is described by the best modern authorities."* "Can any one doubt," Professor Burdick asks, "that Luke is describing, with absolute accuracy, events which he witnessed, or which were recounted to him by St. Paul? . . . I do not know of any historian who has embodied in his narrative an account of a judicial trial so satisfactory to a lawyer as this by Luke; one in which the various stages are accurately followed, and matters of procedure as well as of substantive law are presented with the certainty of him who speaks from personal knowledge." This striking testimony is not to be taken as certifying that the speeches are *verbatim* reports, nor as corroborating every intervening detail.† Later we shall hear much of editorial

* Similarly, the eminent historian, Mommsen, writing in 1901, "finds the account of Paul's trials before Felix and Festus, in spite of some editorial touches, to be quite in accordance with Roman legal form, and says that in this instance alone is a case of appeal to the Emperor placed before us in living reality." (Menzies in Peake's *Commentary*, page 801.)

† With regard to the speeches, here and elsewhere, Professor Percy Gardner, writing in *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, finds Pauline, Lucan, and "conventional" features in those delivered at Antioch, Athens, Miletus, Jerusalem, and before Felix and Agrippa.

additions. From these this part of the book is not likely to have escaped. But the main events stand corroborated.

Another evidence of St. Luke's accuracy is in the correct way in which, with noticeable frequency, he describes the position and authority of the officials of the Empire in the different provinces through which St. Paul passes. One interesting example is the use of a Greek word meaning "rulers of the city" as the name for the authorities at Thessalonica before whom Jason was brought by the hostile Jews (Acts xvii. 6). The word translated "rulers of the city," *politarchs*, was not found anywhere else in Greek. Another of St. Luke's inaccuracies! it was said. But an inscription on an arch spanning a street in Salonika was found to contain the very word. At the instance of Dean Stanley, and by request of the British consul, the inscription was preserved when the arch containing it was being taken down in 1876. It is now in the British Museum.* Other inscriptions containing the word have since been found in Thessalonica (Salonika) and elsewhere. Instead, therefore, of its being an inaccuracy, it is a peculiarly strong proof either that St. Luke actually went there or that he received his information from some one who had been there. Other examples of correct description, where, owing to the very varied and far from permanent types of Roman organisation, to be correct required special knowledge, are found in the precise details given of the method of government in different provinces, whether by a Proconsul or by a viceroy (*Proprætor*). In provinces which are known to have changed their method of government from time to time, St. Luke correctly describes the man on the spot at the time of St. Paul's travels. In Acts xviii. 12 Gallio and in Acts xiii. 7 Sergius Paulus are correctly named Proconsuls. The same exactness is seen in the description of the governor of Malta as the *Primus* (ὁ πρῶτος, Acts xxviii. 7). This title,

* See illustrations of this and other finds in *Young People's Bible*.

like that of "politarchs," did not occur elsewhere in Greek literature; but inscriptions recently found at Malta confirm it. Add to all this that, whilst no other writer in the New Testament ever names an Emperor, St. Luke names three, Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, and even dates events by the year of the Emperor's reign; and we have an author who is taking big risks, unless, as everything goes to show, he is sure of his ground. And the result, as Dr. Charles Gore states it, is that "the vindication by inscriptions and otherwise of St. Luke's trustworthiness on all that touches the Roman Empire has been startling." ⁸⁸

A still further argument for the genuineness and the historical truth of the travel-sections in the *Acts* is in the natural way in which incidents and situations are described. "In the cities," writes Sir W. M. Ramsay, "Paul is brought into contact with a great variety of people of all ranks of life. Kings, and Roman governors of provinces . . . members of the high Council of Areopagus in Athens, priests of the local gods at Lystra, Roman citizens . . . leading women in many cities (some as opponents, some as friends and helpers), tradesmen, magicians. . . . The variety is remarkable. The propriety of the references and the naturalness and suitability of the incidents are perfect. The more one knows about Græco-Roman society in the East, the more deeply is one impressed with the life-like character of the scenes described in rapid succession, so briefly yet so pregnantly, in those chapters of the *Acts*" (XIII. to XXI.). "You may press the words of Luke in a degree far beyond any other historian's, and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment, provided always that the critic knows the subject and does not go beyond the limits of science and justice." ⁸⁹

*St. Luke's Account of the Early Struggles and Successes
of the Church*

The trustworthiness of the later chapters being in these ways brought into relief, that of the earlier chapters is,

more or less, to be inferred from the unmistakable evidence of style, point of view, and method of narrating that they are from the same pen as the later chapters. Zeller, some of whose criticisms have already been quoted as representing the extreme views of the Tübingen School, says, after a most careful and detailed study: "These numerous peculiarities of language and description running through the whole of the Acts, and in great part through the third Gospel, suffice to place it beyond doubt that we must regard our book as the work of a single author, who has stamped it with a characteristic impress of style and manner. . . . Still further, it is just from the contents of our book and the essential harmony of all its parts that the unity of its authorship is most decidedly educed."⁹⁰

(Considering the large number of books recently written and still being written on the *Acts*, the reader will understand a certain noticeable compression in what follows.)

Waiving for a moment the question of later editings and interpolations, and the still more important question of sources of information and method of treating them, there is little difficulty in ranking the authorship of the earlier chapters of the *Acts* with that of the later chapters. Even so, however, differing opinions are held regarding the sources whence St. Luke got his material for the earlier chapters. Some think they were put together from information variously collected, following the method their author had adopted in writing his Gospel. Others look upon them as derived almost in their entirety from an earlier writing.

(a) Amongst the latter, Professor Burkitt thinks that the lost ending of St. Mark's Gospel originally covered much of the period dealt with in the first twelve chapters of the *Acts*. He compares Acts I.-XII. with St. Luke's account of the last visit to Jerusalem. In the Gospel story, which is largely a re-writing of St. Mark x. 32-XIII., not only is the original curtailed, but the chronological links are gone. There in his literary handling of

the reminiscences of eyewitnesses, St. Luke "stages" the narrative to produce a well-marked impression, though sketching general historical truth, and giving much solid information. Writing, as throughout his Gospel, in a style and manner which he strives to make worthy of his noble theme, he tells with clearness and charm what he wants to tell, but no more than this. And in the earlier chapters of *Acts*, Burkitt traces the same qualities. He finds in them history of the same order as in the account given by St. Luke of the last visit to Jerusalem. If we are less sure of our ground, it is because, in these chapters of *Acts*, we have no longer the source with which to compare them. Another writer, C. C. Torrey, writing on *The Composition and Date of the Acts*, urges the somewhat similar view, that the first half of the book is a very close translation of an Aramaic writing of about A.D. 49 or 50 from the pen of a Christian of Jerusalem. The idea of a sequel to his Gospel first occurred to St. Luke, he thinks, when this writing fell into his hands. Accordingly, this part of the *Acts* is not a work of any considerable labour or research. "It was merely the translation of a single document—a lucky find." (Such authorities as Peake, and, writing jointly, Foakes-Jackson and Lake, are impressed by Torrey's arguments.)

(b) Those, on the other hand, who regard them as, in the main, St. Luke's own writing, find clues in these early chapters of *Acts* to the authorities on whom he depends. In the twelfth chapter, for instance, we read that after St. Peter's deliverance from prison, he came to the house of Mary the mother of "John, whose surname was Mark." We know that St. Mark was an associate of St. Luke. Salutations are sent to Philemon from "Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers"; the same four names occurring similarly in *Colossians*. St. Mark was thus at hand as an authority or referee with regard to many matters of which he had direct knowledge. St. Barnabas, uncle to St. Mark (*Colossians* iv. 10), whose knowledge went back to the earliest apostolic days (*Acts*

iv. 36), would be another available informant. A third authority for exceedingly important passages in the early chapter of the *Acts* (e.g., vi. 1 to viii. 3, viii. 4-40, x. 1-xi. 12) would be Philip the Evangelist, of Cæsarea, a former companion of Stephen, with whom St. Luke speaks of having stayed (xxi. 8), and with whom he would have had many opportunities of conversing during St. Paul's two years of imprisonment at Cæsarea.

The question of the literary history of this first half of the *Acts* remains, therefore, an open one. But, accepting either theory, it is seen that St. Luke not only wrote what appeared to him as worthy of being recorded, but that he had good outside support for what he did write.

There is another more general part of the argument which, whilst it belongs in one way to the whole book, affects the historical truth of these earlier chapters and which must be referred to, however briefly. It belongs to the discussion of the date of the *Acts*.

The Date of the Acts

Opinions differ somewhat widely with regard to the date when the *Acts* was written. Two must be referred to here, without mention of which no inquiry into the historical character of this important book can be satisfactory.

On one hand is the view that St. Luke finished the writing of the *Acts* whilst St. Paul was still living. This opinion has the merit of being by no means new, having been held by Jerome, the most learned of the Latin Fathers, who wrote in the fourth and early part of the fifth centuries. It has recently been advocated by Dr. Charles Gore in his chapter on the *Historical Worth of the New Testament*. "Is it conceivable," he asks, "that if, as has been commonly supposed, the *Acts* was written some fifteen years or more later, the author could have given no indication of the result of St. Paul's trial or of the manner of his death; or that he could have given so favourable an impression of

the policy of the Empire towards the Church, without the least hint that it was so soon to pass into a policy of deliberate persecution, under which Peter and Paul would be martyred with many others? Are not all the probabilities of the case met by the theory that the Acts was written up to date, *i.e.*, about A.D. 63, while St. Paul was still awaiting his trial, and that if the author had intended to continue his narrative, his intention was frustrated, perhaps by his own death? This has been very ably argued by Rackham—not for the first time. . . . Since then Harnack has changed his mind and has finally claimed it as almost certain that St. Luke wrote the Acts up to date, and that the Gospel, the first of St. Luke's two volumes, must therefore have been written earlier, and as the Gospel is based upon Mark's Gospel, that again must have been accessible in A.D. 60 at the latest."⁹¹

On the other hand, Burkitt, who adopts a later date, explains the sudden breaking off at the end of *Acts* by supposing that we have two portions of a historical work by St. Luke which was apparently planned to run to three volumes; the third not being preserved, in fact in all probability never written. Burkitt believes that both the Gospel and the *Acts* contain details drawn directly from the *Jewish Antiquities* of Josephus which was published in A.D. 93 or 94; though agreeing that the literary evidence points to the author as having been a companion of St. Paul.

These supposed Josephus references bring us in more ways than one up against our problem of the trustworthiness of the *Acts*. Not only do they bear upon the date of the *Acts*—in itself a matter of considerable importance, but there are cases of discrepancy between the two accounts. The most difficult instance occurs in the report of Gamaliel's speech to the Council (Acts v. 35-39), in the course of which he refers to an insurrection under an impostor, Theudas. Josephus says much about the revolts of the Jews; and the only Theudas spoken of by him (Book XX.

v. 1) in a way that strongly, but by no means completely, resembles Gamaliel's description, headed an insurrection in A.D. 45 or 46 ; which is altogether too late a date for the event to which Gamaliel was referring. But, inasmuch as Josephus also says, with regard to a period that would harmonise with Gamaliel's statement, that " at this time there were ten thousand other disorders in Judæa, which were like tumults " (Book XVII. x. 4) ; and as Theudas was not an uncommon name, it might conceivably (Bishop Lightfoot and others think probably) have been an earlier Theudas to whom Gamaliel refers. But there is no need to strain in order to bring the two histories into harmony. Suffice it to note that the *Acts* speaks more probably of the numbers concerned in the insurrection ; the discrepancy between Gamaliel's " four hundred " and the Jewish historian's " majority of the people " being very marked. It is also relevant to note that Professor Goguel, of Paris, who assigns A.D. 80 to 90 as the date of the *Acts*, concludes, as do others, that " St. Luke's work is independent of that of Josephus." ⁹²

One of the chief grounds—though not the only one—on which St. Luke is supposed to have used the work of Josephus, and, therefore, to have written many years after the death of St. Paul, appears to be this Theudas reference. And a very probable answer, which covers this and other cases, is, that, if this reference and one in *St. Luke* (on which see Appendix D, Note A) are indeed taken from Josephus, not St. Luke himself but a later editor or editors may have introduced them.*

* Goguel dismisses the discussion in a sentence. " There are some inconsistencies in this story," he says (op. cit. page 186), " which arise either from an editor's carelessness, or more likely from its being written over and touched up." See also Note 92.

Foakes-Jackson and Lake in the second volume of *The Beginnings of Christianity: Part I; The Acts of the Apostles* (1922) include articles on *The Case for the Tradition* and *The Case against the Tradition*. The writer of the latter article is so convinced of the presence of another hand that he goes so far as to hold, in opposition to the now general view, that St. Luke was not the author of the Acts: but that the actual author

Reasons for thinking that the *Acts* was written, in accordance with the view first given, before the death of St. Paul are given at greater length in the appendix just quoted.

Illustrations from St. Luke's Gospel

Since the *Acts* and *St. Luke* are, by general consent, by the same author, making good the historical claim of the one book goes far towards substantiating the claim of the other. And, vice versâ, a glaring flaw in either would weaken the case for both. "While human nature is fallible, and any man may make a slip in some unimportant detail, it is absolutely necessary to demand inexorably from a real historian accuracy in the essential and critical facts." Hence, when Ramsay, whose words these are, found himself challenged in respect of an almost undeniable mistake in St. Luke's Nativity story, which, if incorrect, would lay the writer open to the charge of perverting facts *in order to make out a case* for the birth of Christ at Bethlehem, there was nothing for him to do but to take up the challenge. According to the statements referring to Roman rulers at the time: Herod was king of Judæa (St. Luke i. 5); Cæsar Augustus was Emperor at Rome (II. 1); Quirinius (A.V. Cyrenius) was governor of Syria (II. 2). The further, and the vital, fact was that "Joseph went up to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him." Roman records showed Quirinius to have been governor of Syria in A.D. 5-6; but not before. How could he have been contemporaneous with Herod who died in

used a diary of St. Luke's. He accounts for the use of the first person plural "we" by the "literary methods of antiquity." On this point, the ordinary reader may judge for himself whether there is any vaguest suggestion to his mind that the writer of the record suddenly adopts a "literary method"; or whether it is not as clear as a piece of writing can itself show it to be, that he is simply going on with his story in the directest way.

4 B.C. ? The whole passage, including the birth at Bethlehem, was set down as unhistorical. On the face of it, the dates were hopelessly at odds ; and for the purpose of the census, it was said, there was no reason why Joseph and Mary should journey to their native place.

In searching for an answer to these criticisms, Ramsay pinned his faith to St. Luke's word " first "—" this was the first enrolment made " (St. Luke II. 2), which clearly suggests repetition. And, in spite of there being almost no secular history recorded between the years 15 B.C. and A.D. 14, the fact of a series of enrolments, one of which would fall in 8 B.C., was proved. Thus, in A.D. 48 a man returned his age as 150. The authorities were sceptical ; but existing records of previous enrolments showed him to be right. This proves a series. Then, notices were found of the census being taken at regular intervals of fourteen years, in A.D. 34, 48, 62, 76. Calculating backwards, this gives 8 B.C. as the date of a census. And, as if to confirm this, the Christian writer Tertullian (about A.D. 150 to 230) made the discovery that the birth of Jesus was dated at the time when a census was being made in Syria by an official whose period of office was between 8 and 6 B.C. The establishing of these few facts does away with most of the existing difficulties in St. Luke II. 1-4, excepting the question of the governorship of Quirinius. It was left for Sir W. M. Ramsay himself to discover an inscription at Antioch showing that Quirinius was indeed governor of Syria at some time between 10 and 7 B.C. This fact is now accepted by authorities on Roman history ; and with it also the evidence for the decree of the Emperor Augustus, ordering every man and woman to return to their native place for enrolment. " Nowhere," says Ramsay, " in the whole range of historical study has there ever been such a complete revolution of opinion and of established knowledge as in respect of this statement which brings into its sweep so many details of administration. . . . Discovery confirms the correctness of all the facts that Luke mentions

regarding the census and its manner and its date.”⁹³ Henceforward, no one need hesitate to assert that Christ was born at Bethlehem.

Shirking no issue, Ramsay admits that this does not carry with it the whole of the mysterious story of the birth of Christ. Regarding this, we have St. Luke’s declaration (St. Luke i. 3) that he had “traced the course of all things accurately from the beginning (*ἀνωθεν*).” “If Luke had had the slightest trace of historical instinct, he must have satisfied himself that the narrative which he gives rested on the evidence of one of the few persons to whom the facts could be known. He does not leave it doubtful whose authority he believed himself to have.” *Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. . . . They understood not the saying which he spake. . . . He went down with them, and came to Nazareth ; and was subject to them ; and his mother kept all these things in her heart.* “The historian who wrote like that believed that he had the authority of the Mother herself.”* The narrative, Ramsay concludes, with great truth of feeling, “expresses the heart of Mary.” The revelation it holds within it “exists and moves on a higher plane of thought. . . . It does not spring from any more fundamental principle. It is the fountain from which all other so-called principles flow. There is nothing true without God ; and there is nothing true except the Divine in the infinite variety of His manifestation.”⁹³

We are thus on the threshold of St. Luke’s evident belief in the reality of miracle. This has been consistently noted by all schools of commentators. It lay behind the criticism

* St. Luke possessing, as a Hellene, the mental peculiarities of the Greek rather than of the Jew, Ramsay thinks it fair to say that the narrative coming to him from one who thought in Hebraic fashion, and whose language was saturated with Hebrew imagery, was by him, “re-thought out of the Hebraic into the Greek fashion.” In the Annunciation, for instance, the messenger of God to Mary became to St. Luke a winged personal being, like Iris or Hermes ; though St. Luke was translating as exactly as he could into Greek the account which he had heard. (*St. Luke the Physician*, page 13.)

of the Tübingen School, who held, almost as the basis of their criticism, that as his and all miracles were unbelievable, St. Luke (or, rather, the second-century author of the *Acts*) was also unbelievable; that he was not even trying to write history, but only an impressive tractate in the interests of unity between the Judaic and Pauline parties in the early church.

Of the fact of St. Luke's delight in miracle there can be no question. The only question is, How does this affect the historical value of his record? He narrates facts, and implies an interpretation. But remembering the comparison already quoted between the first century and the nineteenth, does this signify more than one of the St. Margaret's Lecturers said in 1902? "It may be that the author of the *Acts* classified as miracles some occurrences in which we, with our wider knowledge, would perceive the operations of the ordinary laws of nature and of God; but that, if true, would prove that he was a man of his own time, not of ours"; adding, "We have no sort of title to assume that the miracle stories of the *Acts* are necessarily untrue."⁹⁴ Nor are we compelled to rule out, as some still tend to do, such narratives as romantic editorial additions.

Not to repeat what was said on this point at the end of the previous chapter, we may, perhaps, regard many of the wonder stories of St. Luke as, strictly speaking, natural events. In the progress of knowledge, far more is known of nature and of what is natural than was known in the first century. But even so,—and granting that all that happened was the working of hitherto (and, in some instances, of *even yet*) undiscovered law—is there nothing to be said for the insight and the spiritual energy which enabled first-century men to foresee results from their voice and touch, which are not the less wonderful because we to-day have learnt to speak of some of them as "natural" rather than miraculous? Values attach to the superb confidence of St. Peter when, if we must so say, by "natural"

means, albeit accompanied by prayer (Acts ix. 40), he restored Dorcas ; or of St. Peter and St. John when, "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth," they healed the lame man at the gate called Beautiful ; or of St. Paul when, "in the name of Jesus Christ," he cast out the spirit of divination from the Philippian maid, and when he revived Eutychus. If, in the view of this peculiar insight and spiritual energy of the apostles and of the values which attached to their confidence and to their cures, St. Luke regarded as directly the act of God that which was sometimes only indirectly so, this in no way detracts from the historical reality of the events themselves, all of which may have been actual enough. It would almost seem like wandering from the point of mere historical trustworthiness to dwell in this way upon interpretations, were it not that interpretations brought to the New Testament have led men to rule out its historic value. By Zeller's criterion of the impossibility of the "miraculous," St. Luke was condemned unheard. But we are surely not justified in rejecting records simply because they contain something that we cannot see through. The narrowness of scepticism would then be narrower than the narrowness of belief. It would leave no margin for faith in a future, for the discoveries it may make, and for the interpretations it may bring to bear. There is much relevancy in Ramsay's comment : "Every great work of literature like Luke's History must be re-interpreted by each age for itself." ⁹⁵

BRIEF SUMMARY OF RESULTS

To sum up in a word or two : What have we in the Gospels and the *Acts*, the books of the New Testament we have so far considered ? We have beyond all doubt an earnestly-conceived literature, owing its origin to members of the early companies of disciples and apostles. We may regret that we have not the writings exactly as they left their first writers' hands. Yet it is safe to say that the

fact of their not having come to us pure has done much to make the New Testament by far the most thoroughly studied book in the world. In the process of sifting many a sparkle of precious ore is seen that would otherwise have been missed. As for the somewhat free—and, say what we will, troublesome ⁹²—treatment of the text by copyists and editors, these men are not to be charged with any breach of good faith. The writings were to them their groundwork. According to the standards of those pre-copyright days, it would not be thought a culpable misuse of such writings to adapt them to propagandist ends. It may have been that from pure zeal for the upbuilding of the Church and the spread of the Faith, slight, and occasionally even more than slight, adaptations were made in hours of controversy. The very fact of the original writings being early (especially if, as we have seen, there are some grounds for thinking, two of the three first Gospels and the *Acts* were in substance written before the great upheaval caused by the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70) may have made these later adaptations, and the use of a certain freedom in copying, appear the more justifiable and necessary under the changed conditions. And when we remember that the oldest New Testament manuscript dates from the fourth century, it is evident that there was ample time for more than one re-handling of the text.

It is well that, as Burkitt says, the problems and, to some extent, the material for their solution lie in our hands, in the New Testament itself. We are thus somewhat in the position of jurymen. Jurymen are seldom experts. They are not required to be. It is enough that they bring unbiased minds and follow the evidence faithfully. And when the facts touch human nature so deeply as do the truths of the New Testament, when counsel plead so weightily, and when the main counts in the evidence (not the profundities of scholarship, but the things that leap to the eye and that matter most) are, on the whole, so understandable, no one is likely to wish that everything

had been infallibly decided for him, and his own thinking left out of the case altogether. Thus, taking the *Acts* as a sort of test case, there are, on the one hand, the features which have caused some to think it written later than the *Antiquities* of Josephus. On the other hand are the evidences of trust in the impartiality and tolerance of the Empire, and the fact of the book finishing without telling the result of St. Paul's trial at Rome—and this on the part of one who had dealt with the earlier stages of his trial in such detail: these point to its being written early. The two sets of facts are on the way towards reconciliation when later editings are allowed for. In any case there is no call for special pleading. With all the qualifications that need to be brought to bear, there is a firm strand of history running through St. Luke's writing from the first verse of the Gospel to the last verse of the *Acts*.

Two facts remain. The first, that many difficulties have been removed with the growth of our knowledge, confidence being thereby re-established; the second, that in reading parts of the Bible, especially the New Testament, we are so manifestly in the presence of marvel beyond our ken that the path of wisdom is sometimes to hold judgment in suspense.

[There are some, doubtless, to whom the literary evidence will not of itself entirely appeal; and for whom the historical reality of New Testament story will rest, in part at least, on more general grounds. Questions of probability and even of possibility anticipate all others in their minds. This, evidently, is not the place to take up these peculiarly interesting questions. Hints towards an answer are: that we are living not merely in a world or earth, but in a universe, through whose countless wonders there runs a single plan; and that it is a true universe, that is, it is a *unity* of linked-up parts. It is neither unphilosophical nor unscientific to say that, in such a universe, so supreme and yet so natural a "miracle" as the coming of One of higher nature than ours is possible, or even probable. Even Tyndall, it will be remembered, declined to be charged with denying the *possibility* of miracle. Here, without departing from the lines of the present study, it will go a little of the way towards meeting those whose queries lie farther back than the purely literary problem, if we quote men of such philosophical and critical attitude as J. S. Mill and Renan. "Who," John Stuart Mill asks towards the end

of his *Essays on Religion*, "among His disciples or among their proselytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different sort; still less the early Christian writers in whom nothing is more evident than that the good which was in them was all derived, as they always professed that it was derived, from the higher source." There is also that astonishing sentence already quoted from Renan's *Life of Jesus*: "It was then for some months, perhaps a year, that God truly dwelt upon the earth." As to the blending in Christ of a Divine-human nature, the same two writers may be further quoted. Mill says: "The most valuable part of the effect on the character which Christianity has produced by holding up in a Divine Person a standard of excellence . . . is available even to the absolute unbeliever and can never more be lost to humanity. . . . It is the God incarnate, more than the God of the Jews or of Nature, who being idealised has taken so great and salutary a hold on the modern mind. And whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left; a unique figure, not more unlike all his precursors than all his followers. It is no use to say that Christ as exhibited in the Gospels is not historical. . . . Nor, even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve his life." And Renan speaks of "the incomparable man, to whom the universal conscience has decreed the title of Son of God, and that with justice, since he has advanced religion as no other has done, or probably ever will be able to do."]

CHAPTER VIII

The Historical Groundwork in the New Testament

IV. THE EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL

“ Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

1 *Corinthians* iii. 11.

To a fellow-traveller of St. Paul we owe, in parts of the *Acts*, an example of one of the New Testament types of first-hand history—an account in the words of an eye-witness. To St. Paul himself we owe first-hand history of a somewhat different type in the letters he wrote to various companies of believers. These letters, it is to be noted, were written to those who had accepted Christianity and were “ in any case in possession of a background of information as to Jesus.” They were not missionary letters, therefore, in which the writer would need to give an account of the life and work of Christ ; but were written to deal with practical questions of faith and behaviour which of necessity arose. This is the reason why we do not find much Gospel history in them. But we find what, having the Gospels, is for us vastly more valuable, namely, a glimpse into the movement of the new life of faith and hope and love in the small groups of people who had accepted it, and who, collectively, formed the early Church.

Authenticity of the Epistles

Not all of St. Paul’s letters have come down to us. And, of those that bear his name in our New Testament,

at least one, the Epistle to the Hebrews,* and parts of the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, are not his. For the rest, Professor Deissmann, referring to their treatment at the hands of critics, says: "The extant letters of St. Paul have been innocently obliged to endure a fair share of the martyrdom suffered by the historic St. Paul: 'Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck.' There is really no trouble," he continues, "except with the letters to Timothy and Titus" (of course, he excludes the Hebrews), "and even there the difficulties are perhaps not quite so great as many of our specialists assume."⁹⁶ Yet, the more searching the scrutiny, the greater the confidence we have in the writings that successfully bear it. Four of these letters, those to the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Galatians, stand out conspicuously as having come through the fires unscathed: criticised, and our reading of them helped in places; but to all intents and purposes left as written, and acknowledged to have been written by St. Paul. The rigour of the testing—for Renan, Strauss, and the extreme critics of the Tübingen School admitted them—increases tremendously our confidence and our interest in them. 'Tis more than mere prosaic fact that these four letters are *known* to have been written by St. Paul himself! It is part of the romance of the Faith. Actual letters, pages and pages of the very words of such a man as, in a rapid sketch, we shall in a moment see St. Paul to have been! Not that these are all that we are sure of. Gradually, the presence of that author's spirit—author of so much besides "epistles"—and the impress of his hand have been recognised. Unmistakably, in 1 *Thessalonians*, *Philippians*, *Colossians*, and *Philemon*, regarding the last of which Dr. Peake says, with admirable point, "no one could have imitated Paul in so

* It is amazing that the Revised Version continues to print the title: "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews." Why any version should continue to print notorious errors, such as this and the 1611 mis-translation of Isaiah ix. 3, is also a trifle astonishing. (See Note ⁹⁹.)

inimitable a way";⁹⁷ scarcely less clearly, in 2 *Thessalonians* and *Ephesians*: and in the letters to Timothy and Titus, Pauline features.

It may naturally be asked, How are these letters proved to be St. Paul's? Both by external and by internal evidence. With regard to the letters to the Galatians, to the Corinthians, and to the Romans, which Baur, the founder of the Tübingen School of criticism, ranks as "genuine epistles of the Apostle," one can scarcely do better than follow the reasoning which led Baur himself to acknowledge their genuineness. What convinced him should convince any one. Contenting himself with quoting the names of two early writers who include these epistles with others in their lists of accepted New Testament writings, Baur says: "There never has been the slightest suspicion of unauthenticity cast on these four epistles, and they bear so incontestably the character of Pauline originality that there is no conceivable ground for the assertion of critical doubts in their case." The internal evidence also he regards as beyond question. The Epistle to the Galatians "takes us to the very ferment of the strife between Judaism and Christianity. . . . The peculiar theme of the epistle is the vindication of Pauline Christianity, which was necessarily at the same time the personal vindication of the Apostle." The Epistles to the Corinthians "introduce us to the very centre of the Apostle's busy and many-sided activity as the founder of the Gentile Christian churches." But, "only from the standpoint of the Epistle to the Romans do we survey the rich treasures of the spiritual life which were vested in the Apostle and proclaimed by him":⁹⁸ this epistle completing the system of thought first boldly sketched in the *Galatians*. There is external evidence in support of these letters (especially 1 Corinthians and Romans) in references by early writers; but the point needs no labouring.

With regard to the rest of the Epistles, Baur anticipated that the weight of the reasons against their authentic origin

and character would "not in all probability be diminished by the further free exercise of criticism, but rather strengthened." Events have shown the contrary; and the strong tendency is to accept all, with the exception of parts of the letters to Timothy and Titus, and with some querying with regard to 2 *Thessalonians*.

The letters being thus guaranteed, we have in them history of the best sort; not the merely external and, so to say, public history of statistics and the like, but the history of the inner movement of the new life within the Church itself. The historical material presented to us in the life and in the writings of St. Paul has been well described as "the key to early Church history."

ST. PAUL

As for the man that writes these letters, "each of St. Paul's letters," it has been said, "is a portrait of St. Paul." Two words sum up the portraiture we have of him, from his own pen and St. Luke's, each charged with great fullness of meaning:—*human* and *inspired*.

As a man, we see in St. Paul a master workman, a tent-maker able to take orders wherever he settled and to support himself. And here one pauses, to note the deep historical significance of the fact that both Christ and St. Paul knew the meaning of manual labour; that they gripped tools and materials as workmen. Thus, as men, they were trained, equipped with power of hand and power of the "working brain." As men, they touched humanity at its roots (as healers and preachers even at its depths); that they might raise humanity towards its heights.

St. Paul was an educated man; a strict Puritan ("after the strictest sect, a Pharisee") in his bringing up, but an instructed Puritan. Had we known him as young Saul of Tarsus, we should have known a fine, straight fellow, capable of a certain fierceness, a man who could hit hard and stand it well when hit hard in return; a man religious

to the core ; a student of the Old Testament Scriptures, as Christ was. An enthusiast by nature, his conversion wrought a tremendous change in him, arresting the current of his vehement opposition to the followers of the Way in the very height of its flow, and by a mighty force reversing it. So he became a missionary ; consciously and strenuously, a Christian ; unconsciously, a historian of Christianity.

Historian of what ? The first Corinthian letter alone will show. Of the Cross, and its vast meaning in the life of the race. That was the centre of all things for St. Paul. " Christ and Him crucified." To the Jews it might be a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness : to him it was " Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Historian, also, of Calvary's sequel, the Resurrection. 1 Corinthians xv. summarises the evidence he had collected, and the noble deductions he derived from it : a chapter not to reserve for hours of sorrow when we mourn the loss of our beloved, but to read in our hours of jubilation and great rejoicing over the victory and the meaning of the victory of Christ in bringing Life and Immortality to light. And further, the history we have at first hand from St. Paul in this single Epistle reveals a Church established ; the rite of baptism and the sacrament of the Last Supper being part of its life.

We know this Apostle of Christ as St. Paul. A Saint ! with all the meanings with which a sterling humanity and high inspiration invest that name—greatest that man can bear. A man of healthy spirit, the notes of a keen athleticism often ringing out in his messages : a runner for Christ ; shaping his own career as a man who was always in training, and bidding others be ready to " endure hardness " ; a fighter born, who put all the fight that was in him into his religion ; so that as a mere retrospect he could say towards the close, " I have fought a good fight ; I have covered the course ; henceforth the laurel crown—a crown of life ! " He lived out his life to the full ; with toil of hand, and toil of brain, and heart warm with affection, sympathy,

solicitude ; missionary, pastor, martyr, enduring much rough treatment of the cruellest kind ; yet an optimist even to the point of certainty—greeting doubts with a confident “ we know.” Here was one who was spiritually aflame, having a life in him that glowed and burned. “ Christ ” lived in him. He was aflame with the fire of God.

This man set out all but single-handedly to preach ; beginning always with the Jews, who were predisposed to hate the new teaching, that One whom their rulers and chief priests had crucified was their Messiah ; and whose antagonism was so bitter that we read of them on one occasion following him up, not only along the eighteen miles from Iconium to Lystra, but the full hundred miles from Antioch, in order, as they hoped, to end his career ; “ and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.” Amongst non-Jewish people, his preaching brought him up against vested interests : those of the silversmiths of Ephesus ; those of the masters of the frenzied girl at Philippi, out of whose soothsayings they made money,—flogging and imprisonment following. And, all the time, this man was writing these letters—of counsel, strength, encouragement ; telling of his thanksgiving in his prayers, and of his confident hope. The spirit of it cannot be better summed up than in a verse from *St. Paul* by F. W. H. Myers :—

“ Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest
 Cannot confound nor doubt Him nor deny :
 Yea with one voice, O world, tho’ thou deniest,
 Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.”

APPENDIX A

SOME LEADING DATES OF OLD TESTAMENT LITERATURE AND HISTORY

BEFORE 2000 B.C. :—

Babylonian and Egyptian history going back to 4000–5000 B.C. Pyramids dated between 5000 and 3000 B.C. More than two thousand years of ascertained history, therefore, before we approach Hebrew history.

About 2000 B.C. :—

Code of Hammurabi. *Probably* time of Abraham. (See pages 14, 15.)

About 1450–1365 B.C. :—

Baked clay tablets of this date found at Tel-el-Amarna. (See page 46.)

Roughly, the time of the Joseph story. (See page 47.)

About 1300 B.C. :—

Rameses II., usually regarded as the Pharaoh of the Oppression, of whom there exist many sculptured portraits in rock and in huge stone monuments. He built (or re-built) the treasure-cities of Pithom and Rameses, where *Exodus* says the Israelites worked as slaves. (See page 47 and Note 47a.)

About 1250 B.C. :—

The Pharaoh of the Exodus (Mosaic times). For probable Mosaic originals see pages 15 and 16 and Note 47a.

About 1200 B.C. :—

A centralised date for the Conquest of Canaan. The Bible story draws together what was spread over longer time than is suggested in it.

Ancient literary fragments are: Genesis iv. 23, 24; Numbers xxi. 14, 15, 17, 18, 27-30; and Joshua x. 12, 13 (the sun "standing still"). Joshua x. last half of 13 and 14 is an editor's comment showing that he mistakenly treated the snatch of poetry literally.

About 1009 B.C. :—

David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan. (See page 49.)

About 1003-934 B.C. :—

The United Monarchy. (See page 49.)

920-900 B.C. :—

Probably the stories of the Greater Judges:—Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson (as part of the Northern Kingdom's patriotic literature); and, probably, story of David's reign in 2 Samuel ix.-xx. (Southern Kingdom). (See page 50.)

About 850 B.C. :—

The "J" (or Jehovist) "prophetic history." It contained the Eden story, the older Flood story, the older Balaam story; and such passages as Genesis xii., xvi.; Exodus xxxiii. 12 to xxxiv. 28. In all, nearly one-third of Genesis is from this source; and there are traces of it in Exodus and Joshua.

About 800-750 B.C. :—

The Northern "E" (or Elohist) counterpart of J; more advanced in thought, theological view, and moral tone; *e.g.*, Genesis xx. and xxi. probable reduplications of stories in xii. and xvi. About one-ninth of Genesis is from E; traces in Exodus and Joshua (making, with the traces of J, about one-twentieth of Exodus, and one-sixteenth of Joshua). (See pages 11, 50.)

About 760-735 B.C. :—

Amos (South) and Hosea (North)—*re* dangers threatening Northern Kingdom ; notwithstanding times of prosperity almost equal to those of Solomon. For (1) nobles and rulers were living ill ; (2) were oppressing the poor ; and (3) worship was formal.

Note that in 722 or 721 B.C. the blow fell. (See pages 49, 53.)

About 740-690 B.C. :—

Isaiah of Jerusalem : most of Isaiah I.-xxxix.—part preceding, and relating to, fall of Samaria ; part, warning Judah against similar doom. (See pages 58, 59.) Chapters xii. and xxiv.-xxvii., probably post-Exilic ; xiii. and xiv. 1-23, xxxiv. and xxxv., probably Exilic ; xxxvi.-xxxix., about 600 B.C.

Micah, about 722-708.

Possibly some Psalms and some early Proverbs.

722 or 721 B.C. :—

Fall of Samaria : Northern tribes into captivity and lost to sight altogether. (See page 49.)

Books of Samuel (originally one book) substantially complete about 700 B.C. (See page 12.)

650-600 B.C. :—

About 650, J and E combined. JE (in addition to J and E as separately distinguishable) equals over one-fifth of Genesis, and about one-half of Exodus, one-seventh of Numbers, and three-eighths of Joshua.

621 : The finding in the Temple of a Book of the Law,—the Kernel of Deuteronomy (" D ") : Deuteronomy xii.-xxvi. ; with v.-xi. a moral, and i.-iv. a historical, introduction ; xxvii., xxviii., xxix. and xxx. similar additions. (xxxi.-xxxiv. from various sources, the result of later editing.) About one-fifth of Joshua is from D. (See pages 17, 18.)

Zephaniah, about 630-605.

Nahum, about 625 : Oracle *re* Nineveh. (See pages 13, 36.)

Habakkuk, about 605.

About 600: 1 and 2 Kings (bulk of); and Isaiah xxxvi.-xxxix. (taken from 2 Kings xviii.-xx. See pages 51, 52, 53.)

About 625-586 B.C. :—

Jeremiah's prophecies. Fall of Jerusalem in 586, and Captivity. (See page 55.)

586-538 B.C. :—

Exile in Babylon.

Ezekiel, about 592-570; closing with promises of restoration and return, especially chapters xl.-xlviii. (See pages 19-20, 55-56.)

JED combined.

Obadiah, about 586?

Probably some Psalms.

Probably Jeremiah L., LI.

2 Isaiah, chapters xl.-lv.; xiii.-xiv. 23, xxxiv. and xxxv.; possibly, also lvi.-lxvi. (See pages 55, 56, 59.)

Lamentations i. and v., about 540; "the darkest hour before the dawn": other parts variously dated. (See Peake's *Commentary* or *The Century Bible*.)

Edict of Cyrus in 538, permitting return from exile. (See pages 34, 55.)

About 520 B.C. :—

Zechariah i.-viii.; Haggai; and (?) 3 Isaiah lvi.-lxvi.: prophets of the Return.

Probably some Psalms.

About 500-450 B.C. :—

The Priestly Code ("P") promulgated by Ezra. It contained Genesis i., a Flood story, etc. In all about one-eighth of Genesis; over two-fifths of Exodus; all Leviticus; five-sevenths of Numbers; three-eighths of Joshua. (See pages 18-22, 55.)

458-444 B.C. :—

P and J combined giving us about one-fifth of Genesis;

and, with E (PJE), about one-eighth of Genesis, one-sixth of Numbers, and Exodus xiv.

Return of companies under Ezra (458). (See pages 19, 55.)

Nehemiah's Mission (444).

Malachi, 460-430.

Book of Ruth, about 450 (?)

JEDP combined (about 400 ?) to form the "Hexateuch" (Genesis to Joshua).

About 350-300 B.C. :—

Book of Job, 350 ? or earlier. (See pages 30-33.)

Joel, 350 ?

Jonah, 350-300 ? (See pages 33-36.)

Late additions to Judges, Samuel, and Kings.

Ezra-Nehemiah-Chronicles, usually regarded as originally one book. (See pages 56-57.)

Isaiah xxiv.-xxvii. (probably) and perhaps Isaiah xii.

The Book of Isaiah completed.

Completion of Proverbs, 450-250.

300-200 B.C. :—

Canticles, 300 ?

Zechariah, ix.-xiv., 280 ?

Ecclesiastes, about 250.

Esther, 250-100.

168-142 B.C. :—

The Revolt against Syria led by the Maccabees. The

Book of Daniel (about 165). (See pages 36-37.)

Completion of Psalter, about 150.

142-63 B.C. :—

Complete freedom, religious and political. But came under sway of Rome in 63 B.C.,—remaining so during New Testament times.

During the last two centuries before Christ important literature (the Apocalyptic), connecting the Old and New Testaments. (See pages 22-24.)

APPENDIX B

TENTATIVE CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF NEW TESTAMENT LITERATURE AND HISTORY.*

BETWEEN 7 and 4 B.C. :—

The Birth of Christ. Probably 6 B.C., before the completion of the registration of St. Luke II. 1-4, which may have run on into this year. (See pages 113-115.)

7 A.D. :—

Christ in the Temple.

26 A.D. :—

John the Baptist commences to preach and to baptise.

27 or 28 A.D. :—

Christ is baptised, and commences His ministry.

29 A.D. :—

The Crucifixion and Resurrection.

About 30 or 36 A.D. (as late even as 39 has been suggested) :—

Conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who becomes St. Paul (Acts ix.).

32 or 39 A.D. (or, following the late date of conversion, 42) :—

St. Paul's first visit to Jerusalem, and meeting with St. Peter (Acts ix. ; Galatians i.).

* See Principal A. J. Grieve's article on *The Chronology of the New Testament* in Peake's *Commentary*; or articles in standard Bible Dictionaries; or, for St. Paul, Professor McNeile's *St. Paul: his Life, Letters, and Christian Doctrine*.

44-46 A.D. :—

St. Paul's visit to Jerusalem with relief for famine (Acts xi. 25-30, xii. 25). Some associate this visit with that of Galatians ii.*

Between 45 and 49 A.D. :—

St. Paul's first Missionary Journey (Acts xiii. and xiv.).

49 or 50 A.D. (Harnack 47 ; Lightfoot 51)—

St. Paul at Antioch ; and his visit to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus (Acts xv.). Some associate this visit with Galatians ii. 1-10, rather than that of Acts xi.*

Between 49 and 52 A.D. :—

St. Paul's second Missionary Journey (Acts xv. 36 to xviii. 22) ; reaching Corinth in 50 A.D. and staying till 52 A.D., the date of Gallio's proconsulship. (See pages 63, 155.)

Epistles to the Thessalonians.

52-53 A.D. (Harnack 50 ; Lightfoot 54) :—

Commencement of third Missionary Journey.

Epistle to Galatians (though some place this Epistle at or about 50 A.D. ; others about 56 A.D.).

52-54 A.D. :—

i Corinthians.

* Applying to this divergence of view the principle that the Bible is its own interpreter (page 28), and that we have in our English New Testament not only problems but solutions (page 65), we seem to be on the way to an identification which avoids most of the difficulties attaching to the association of the visit of Galatians ii. with Acts xv.

If the men who, as we read, some time after the visit of Galatians ii. 1-10, came from Jerusalem to Antioch (Galatians ii. 12) were strong enough to cause St. Peter and others to dissemble (12, 13), they would not be likely to let matters rest after St. Paul's open rebuke (14). Bigots are not easily silenced. In all probability they returned to Jerusalem, resolved to carry the matter further. Thus Acts xv. 1—"certain men came from Judæa," appears to be parallel to the first clause of Galatians ii. 12—"certain came from James" ; and the first clause of Acts xv. 2—"no small dissension," to Galatians ii. 11 and 14—"I resisted him." The latter half of Acts xv. 2 with all that follows seems to be a natural sequel. That is to say, Acts xv. 2-30 would be a later visit than that of Galatians ii. 1-10 : and the Galatians ii. 1-10 visit is, therefore, almost certainly to be identified with that of Acts xi.

2 Corinthians x. to xiii. 10, a second short letter of reproof because St. Paul's advice in respect of abuses in the Corinthian church had not been heeded.

Third Missionary Journey between 52 and 56 (Acts xviii. 23-xxi. 16).

54-55 A.D. :—

2 Corinthians i.-ix. and xiii. 11-14. (A letter of relief and satisfaction, his counsel having now been obeyed.)

Epistle to the Romans ; a church St. Paul had not yet visited.

About 56 to 58 A.D. :—

Two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea under Felix. (See Acts xxiv.-xxvi., and pages 104, 110.)

Epistle of James, 58 (?)

Between 57 and 63 A.D. :—

Voyage to Rome and "two whole years'" imprisonment there. (See pages 89, 104, 110-111, 139-143, 145.)

Epistles to Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon.

Philippians.

About 60-65 A.D. :—

The Acts of the Apostles, if written before St. Paul's death ; and therefore, also *St. Luke* and *St. Mark*. (See pages 89-91, 110-113, 139-143.)*

1 Timothy and Titus (61-65), 2 Timothy 65 (?). (See pages 122, 124.)

Some think St. Paul had a period of liberty and made a "fourth Missionary Journey" from Rome.

64-67 A.D. :—

Martyrdom of St. Paul.

Tradition says St. Peter martyred about 65.

65 or 66 A.D. :—

St. Mark (before the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.). Or earlier. (See above and pages 67-71, 74-84, 153.)

* Though alternative dates are given for *St. Mark*, *St. Luke*, and the *Acts*, some reasons for leaning to the earlier are given on pages 89, 110-111, 119, 139-146 ; and see Note 91.

1 Peter variously dated ; 60-65 ; or, some would say, not by St. Peter at all, and written either towards the end of the first or at the beginning of second century.

2 Peter variously dated between 60 and 160 A.D.

About 68 A.D. :—

Epistle to Hebrews (author unknown).

70-75 A.D. :—

St. Luke. (But if the Acts of the Apostles was written before St. Paul's death, this Gospel must be *earlier still*. See above and pages 113-117, 119.)

74-80 A.D. :—

The date frequently given for the Acts of the Apostles. (But see above and note on page 134.)

75-83 A.D. :—

St. Matthew. Some think the whole Gospel before 70 A.D. (See pages 67-71, 83-87, 90, 137.)

90-95 A.D. :—

St. John, about 90. (See pages 92-95.)

Epistles of St. John, about 91.

The Revelation, 90-95 (probably towards the end of the reign of the persecuting Domitian, who died in 96.

St. Jude (date uncertain).

APPENDIX C

NOTE ON THE WORDS OF CHRIST

WITH reference to the brief discussion on pages 83-87, Sir John Hawkins in *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem* (pages 113-118) has drawn up lists of passages which in his judgment are (a) very probably, (b) probably, (c) possibly, derived from Q. Using key-words only, the first list includes the Baptist's preaching, the Temptation, "Agree with thine adversary," non-resistance and love to enemies, the Lord's Prayer, treasure in heaven, serving two masters, "Be not anxious," "Judge not," the mote and the beam, "Ask and it shall be given," the golden rule, houses built on rock and sand, the centurion, "foxes have holes," "the harvest is plenteous," "Fear them not," not peace but division, the Baptist's message, children in market-place, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin," "I thank thee, O Father, etc.," healing the dumb demoniac, "If I by Beelzebub, etc.," "He that is not with me," tree known by fruits, refusal of a sign, "Blessed are your eyes, etc.," the leaven, occasions of stumbling, the lost sheep, "If thy brother sin against thee," how often to forgive, binding heavy burdens upon men (outside of the cup, etc.), "O Jerusalem which killeth the prophets," "Whosoever the carcase is, etc.," watching. Amongst the probable passages derived by both Gospels from Q, are ranged the Beatitudes, the narrow gate, saying "Lord, Lord," the blind leading the blind, faith as grain of mustard seed, two in the field or at the mill, the talents, the pounds, and other

passages. (With regard to the Beatitudes, however, one of the arguments for the use of a common source for the Sayings in the first and the third Gospels is that St. Luke's section in vi. 20-49 (the sermon after coming down from the mount) begins, as does the Sermon on the Mount, with the Beatitudes and ends with the parable of the house built upon the rock. This is thought to point to the same document being used, in spite of divergencies in detail.)

A first inference from these parallel references in *St. Matthew* and *St. Luke* is that the source used was a collection of sayings with some connective matter. In substance, so far as the passages used from it in the first and third Gospels show, the source consisted of moral and religious teachings.

The next step in the argument tends to identify the large amount that *St. Matthew* contains over and above that used by St. Luke with the collection of Sayings (Q). The original collection of Sayings must have consisted of more than the two hundred and thirty-six verses which are to be traced in both *St. Matthew* and *St. Luke*. Papias would not have given such prominence to so slight a document. "Is it conceivable," Sir John Hawkins asks, "that such a precious document would have been allowed to perish utterly?" The natural inference, from the probability of the case, from the traditional association of St. Matthew's name with the first Gospel, and from the words of Papias, is that our *St. Matthew* contains much of the remainder of the collection.

To a similar effect, Godet, after noting that Papias had written *An Explanation of the Discourses of the Lord* in five books, conjectures that these five books may be connected with the five "grand discourses" or sets of discourses—"topical blocks," B. W. Bacon calls them—which he thinks are plainly distinguishable in our *St. Matthew*, though fitted by the compiler of the Gospel into the framework of the history. These groups deal with the new law (v.-vii.); apostleship (x.); the kingdom of heaven

(XIII.); the Christian fellowship (xviii.); the incurring of doom, and judgment (xxiii.-xxv.). Godet suggests that each of the five books of Papias may have had for its subject one of these groups of Sayings. (*Studies on the New Testament*, pages 12-15.)

Several other attempts have been made to reconstruct the *Logia*, or original collection of the words of Christ. With our present knowledge no definite reconstruction is possible. (See article by B. W. Bacon in the *Hibbert Journal* for July 1924, on *The Nature and Design of Q, the Second Synoptic Source*.) Yet the teachings of Christ, in a broad sense, and the spirit of those teachings we most surely know. (Cf. John Stuart Mill's testimony, *Three Essays on Religion*, pages 253-255, quoted on page 120.) Even if we had no Gospels with their recorded Sayings, from such passages in the Epistles as Romans vi.-viii., xii. 15; 1 Corinthians xii.-xv.; Galatians v. and vi.; Philippians ii. 12-iv. 13, we should have no difficulty in realising that a new law had been given, and we should know not only its spirit but much of its substance.

APPENDIX D

ON THE ABRUPT ENDING OF THE "ACTS"

HARNACK, in *The Date of the Acts and of the Synoptic Gospels* (pages 90-135), presents with force the argument for the completion of the Acts about A.D. 62 before St. Paul's trial at Rome had reached its end. Had St. Luke written the closing verses some years later he would have been, says Harnack, "not simply a blundering, but an absolutely incomprehensible, historian!" "I do not see that in any passage of the book," he says elsewhere (*Acts of the Apostles*, page 293), "St. Peter and St. Paul are so treated that we may presume that they were already dead; rather the contrary."

Does not the whole movement and spirit of St. Luke's recital suggest a developing drama of missionary enterprise, of which, so far as the fate of its most prominent personality is concerned, the issue is undecided? Various attempts have been made to account for this. (1) A part is missing,—some even making the suggestion that it was deliberately suppressed by a later editor; or (2) the writer had filled his parchment and was short of space:—against both of which the signs of a true finish are usually regarded as a sufficient argument. (3) There is a lack of interest, not only at this point but throughout the *Acts*, in the fate of individuals as compared with that which is shown in the progress of the spiritual movement (understandable from some points of view in one who shared in the spirit of St. Paul); or (4) the author has accomplished his aim in

relating St. Paul's arrival at Rome and in making him the apostle to the church there :—against both of which suggestions lies the fact that the consummation was not so complete that one can understand St. Luke's seeing in it the closing scene of the spiritual drama he has been unfolding. Still less satisfying is (5) the suggestion that St. Luke was unwilling to falsify the impression that Rome, through its representatives, was so far favourable to Christianity as to have been its protector against the Jews, by telling of St. Paul's judicial martyrdom at Rome ; hence he deliberately suppressed all mention of St. Paul's death. The choice seems to lie between (6) St. Luke's intention to write a third volume,—though this leaves us with a peculiar sense of difficulty if, the trial, to which so much space had been given, being over (and whether convicted then or later, St. Paul was already dead), all reference to such a climax to *this* book was held over to a future work—contemplated, but probably never written ; and (7) that St. Luke finished the writing at the end of the two years and within St. Paul's lifetime. Supposing the reason for the book finishing as it does were, as some have suggested, St. Luke's own illness and death, the difficulty of the tense, “ he spent two years ” (pointing to a period which has come to an end at the moment of writing) would to some extent be met. If the last two verses were written by St. Luke with his own death in prospect, the tense would point to a rapid glance back over the period, and a brief notice of its purport, as he draws his history to an enforced conclusion.

Although, as Professor Knowling says in his *Commentary on the Acts* in the *Expositor's Greek Testament*, “ almost any conjecture seems more probable than that the writer should have concluded so abruptly if he had nothing more to chronicle than the immediate and tragical death of his hero,” one is conscious of a little forcing of the imagination in supposing St. Luke's death ; especially as, with less sheer imagination, some think that he was alive and writ-

ing full thirty years after this date. The acceptance of the seventh of the above explanations, happily, does not tie us down to this. Indeed, a strict reading of the Greek of Acts xxviii. 30 (*He abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and made it his custom to receive all who visited him there*) points to the change that took place as one that affected St. Paul himself.

Much is to be said for the view that what actually took place at the end of the two years was St. Paul's acquittal. In *The Teaching of St. Paul in terms of the Present Day* (page 351), Ramsay quotes a rule laid down by the Emperor Claudius some years earlier that after the lapse of a period of eighteen months or two years, if no accusers appeared to state their case against a prisoner, the latter was presumed to be innocent. St. Paul's detention in semi-liberty was, therefore, to give his prosecutors time and opportunity to appear. Until they did so, the trial could not begin. Evidently, there was nothing to encourage the Jewish accusers of St. Paul to go to Rome; for their case had already been turned down by two successive Roman governors of Palestine (King Agrippa assenting on the second occasion). They did not come. In their default, St. Paul would be set free. His actual trial and martyrdom, if trial there was, would follow a later arrest during Nero's persecution, probably about A.D. 65.

The way is thus open to a very interesting theory quite recently put forward by Dr. Still (*St. Paul on Trial*). He analyses the *Acts* in a way, certainly, which gives it more form and plan than most critics concede—and argues that, on its own internal evidence, it was planned and prepared as part of the defence: the date of writing being, accordingly, about A.D. 61. The first part of the *Acts*, to xii. 23, he shows, treats of (1) the beginnings of the faith and the fellowship, (2) the beginnings of Jewish opposition, (3) the beginnings of official toleration (Acts v. 40), (4) the begin-

nings of divergencies from Jewish practice, including the question of fellowship with uncircumcised Gentiles. In the second part of the Acts, we find that St. Paul, for preaching to the Gentiles, is (1) opposed by riots—the question of circumcision being however settled (xii. 25–xvi. 5), (2) opposed by actions at law, (3) opposed by attempts on his life—leading to his arrest and arraignment at Cæsarea. What, Dr. Still asks, is the purpose of this plan? And answers: To inform those who would try the case at the supposed-to-be impending trial. It was St. Paul's *apologia*; pleaded out of court by his friend acting as his counsel. It answers, progressively, such questions as: Is the Christian religion permissible under Roman law? Does the supreme court of the Jews recognise the Christian religion as permissible under Jewish law? (Note that Gamaliel's counsel had been followed; v. 34–40.) May not Gentile Christians claim the same toleration from Rome as Jewish Christians conforming to the practices of the Jewish Church? St. Paul being charged with sedition and with spreading an illegal religion, what are the actual facts? In view of the answers to these questions, how, then, came St. Paul to be accused before Felix? And, by inference, since the Roman governors in Palestine would not let the accusing Jews have their way, is it worth Cæsar's while to treat the charges seriously? This was the substance of the defence which St. Luke wrote, to be read by Theophilus and by such of those frequenting Cæsar's court as Theophilus could approach. (*St. Paul on Trial*, pages 15–59.) And, this being the purpose of the book, with it it ended. The two years went by; no accusers appeared; and St. Paul was set free. But "a more suitable answer at law for Paul the prisoner could hardly have been submitted" (page 98).

How differently Professor C. C. Torrey interprets the origin of parts of the *Acts* we have already seen (page 109). He would agree with Dr. Still that, whilst St. Luke was travelling with St. Paul, he had no thought of writing this

book ; his reason being that, had it been based on actual notes of travel, we should have had something less incidental and loosely connected than the latter half of the book presents to us. The writing Torrey puts at the time when the Aramaic document fell into St. Luke's hands, probably either at Cæsarea or (with greater likelihood) at Rome : and finds evidence in the account itself that it was written not long after the events (*Composition and Date of the Acts*, pages 66-68).

There are various ways, therefore, of arriving at the conclusion that the *Acts* was written probably at Rome, and within the lifetime of St. Paul. This would amply account for the abruptness with which the book ends.

NOTE A :—*St. Luke* having, by universal consent, been written before the *Acts*, the date of the earlier largely determines the later work.

There are two chief reasons for giving a late date to *St. Luke*, namely, a suspected Josephus reference (see pages III, 112) ; and passages (*e.g.*, *St. Luke* XIX. 42-44 and XXI. 10-27) which read, to some, like descriptions of the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, written after the event.

The suspected dependence on Josephus occurs in *St. Luke* III. 1, where mention is made of "Lysanias, tetrarch of Abilene." A Lysanias is mentioned by Josephus as ruler of Abilene many years before the time of which *St. Luke* is writing ("the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar"). And this was the only traceable connection, outside of this verse in *St. Luke*, between the names of tetrarch and district. But the writer on *St. Luke* in the *Expositor's Greek Testament* tells us of inscriptions, accepted by historians, which make it probable that there was a Lysanias ruling in Abilene at the time to which *St. Luke* refers. The historian Schürer is quoted as saying that *St. Luke* is "thoroughly correct" when he speaks of a Lysanias as tetrarch of Abilene in the fifteenth year of

Tiberius (*The Jewish People*; Div. I., Vol. II., App. 1.). This one argument for a late date is, therefore, far from conclusive; indeed, appears already answered.

With regard to the descriptions of the fate of Jerusalem,—if prophets foresaw and foretold the disasters that befell Israel and Judah,* can it be thought surprising that Christ, who spoke warningly of “the signs of the times,” should foresee and foretell in some direct way the fate of Jerusalem? “On the whole,” says Burkitt (*The Gospel History and its Transmission*, page 180), “men were justified in looking forward at that time to Catastrophe, rather than Progress.” We have heard (page 112) of the widespread unrest and the many futile risings, referred to by Josephus. This unrest and the hollowness of much of the official religion of the day, taken together, were sure harbingers of trouble. Christ knew the kind of Messiah He was at first expected to be; He knew that His Messiahship was being deliberately rejected. This could not but give Him forebodings of disaster. Nor are His words widely different from those in which Old Testament and Apocrypha had couched their warnings (see, especially, the Oxford University Press *New Testament (R.V.) with Fuller References*). Is it not conceivable, *if there are* actual historical touches after the event, that copyists, after A.D. 70, may have added notes here and there (perhaps at first in the margin, later copyists embodying them in the text). As a whole, the argument from the references to the fall of Jerusalem is far from showing that the third Gospel was written after the catastrophe of A.D. 70. And, certainly, there is little enough in the atmosphere and perspective of the book itself to lead one to think so. Note, for example, the references to “the men of this generation” in St. Luke xi. 29–32; the subsequent denunciations of Pharisees and scribes (39–52); the call to watch (xii. 35–46); the lament over the city (xiii. 31–35, especially verse 34); the description of feasting and luxury (xvii. 27, 28); the forecast of xvii. 37,

* Cf. Jeremiah xxvii. 19–22.

"There shall the eagles be gathered together"; and the "going up to Jerusalem" (xviii. 31). None of these references to Jerusalem appear to suggest an already sacked city in the writer's mind.

NOTE B:—In *The Four Gospels: a Study of Origins* (December, 1924), which has appeared since the earlier pages were written, a suggestion is made by Canon Streeter which would not only preserve the present ending of the *Acts* as a true ending (as we have seen it appears to be), but would even make it "a real climax." Theophilus, addressed as "Your Excellence," was evidently a Roman of high position: and the *Acts* is to vindicate preaching to the Gentiles. If this is so, "it is in a spirit of justifiable exultancy that its author leads up to the final words of Paul—'Behold we go to the Gentiles, they *will* hear.'" The "calm confidence" of the last two verses reflects St. Luke's high hopes, as he records that, even under Nero, it had been possible for two years at Rome to proclaim Christianity, with absolute freedom and without restraint" (page 539). Although to some it may appear over-subtle, and not altogether to meet the answer given to suggestions (3) and (4) above, as a view of Streeter's it needs mention.

In other ways, this recent and comprehensive study bears upon vital points in the preceding argument, especially of chapters VI. and VII. At three chief points Streeter's argument looks towards something not vastly dissimilar from that which is tentatively pictured on pages 88-91.

(a) He speaks of Rome as a highly probable centre for biographical writing, the Greeks and Romans differing from the Jews in being "intensely interested in biography, particularly so at this period; witness the names of Plutarch, Suetonius, and Tacitus" (496). St. Mark's Gospel falls into line with this interest. Indeed, one of the early Christian writers tells (whether as a conjecture or as a

tradition) that Roman Christians had asked St. Mark, as a disciple of St. Peter, to write a biographical Gospel. Streeter dates *St. Mark* A.D. 60, at Rome. (Even if assigned to A.D. 65, this Gospel would, he argues, be already ten years out of date, "ecclesiastically" speaking, in view of its "naïveté and primitive characteristics.") Epistles of St. Paul—*Romans* and 1 *Corinthians* and others—already existed, to take rank side by side with this Roman Gospel (*St. Mark*) as a unifying force throughout the scattered churches, which were otherwise loosely federated and showed much local diversity. The "Gospel and the Apostle"—*St. Mark* as the spiritual legacy of St. Peter, the Epistles as the spiritual legacy of St. Paul—"became the rudder of the Church" (498, 499). "The nucleus of the New Testament in both its great divisions is there before the catastrophe of A.D. 70."

(b) But the argument goes further than this. To the earlier form of *St. Luke* or Proto-Luke, already mentioned in Note 65, Streeter gives approximately the same date as that of *St. Mark* (pages 199, 200, etc.).

(c) It is also in keeping with the hypothesis of pages 88-91, that Streeter speaks of the whole church at this epoch as "passionately missionary in character"; and that not only was Rome the most convenient "distributing centre" for the civilised world, but that "it is very likely that the leaders of the Roman Church themselves took measures, and that without delay, to share their treasures, epistles as well as Gospel, with the other churches" (495). The notion of a literary missionary group at Rome is, according to this showing, well within the range of probability.*

* One was tempted to refer to St. Paul's request from Rome (2 Timothy iv. 13) for "the books, and especially the parchments"; the more so, as some think the latter *may* have included more or less official copies of Christ's sayings or early narratives of His life. (See E. F. Brown on *The Pastoral Epistles*, and *The Pastoral Epistles* by Professor Lock.) But careful sifting of the various guesses makes it impossible to say more than that the request points to pronounced literary interests at the time of writing and to probable literary activity.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*: Letters I. and II. Charles Reade: *Bible Characters*, pages 5-8. J. J. P. Valetton: quoted from this Dutch scholar's *Amos and Hosea* (1894) by Sir George Adam Smith: op. cit. (note 57), page 222.

The mottoes facing the title-page are from *Some Aspects of Modern Poetry* (Noyes), page 255, and from Butler's *Analogy*, Part II., Chapter III.

2. R.T.S. pamphlet: *The Wonder of the Bible*, page 13.

3. Quoted by L. T. Townend in *The Bible and the Nineteenth Century*, page 82.

4. Essay on *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time*. In connection with this chapter see also Duff's *History of the Criticism of the Old Testament*.

5. W. F. Adeney: *The Construction of the Bible*. (Out of print.)

6. These figures are so amazing that they are only printed here after receiving specific confirmation.

Far more marvellous astronomical figures than those given have appeared lately.

7. Essay on *Protestantism*.

8. For other examples see *Old Documents and the New Bible*, by Paterson Smyth.

9. F. C. Burkitt: *The Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus*, page 49 (1922 edition).

10. A. C. Benson in *Cornhill Magazine* for August 1907, page 263.

11. Prothero: *Psalms in Human Life*, opening paragraph.
12. *The Bible and the Child*, page 9. (Out of print.)
13. A. S. Peake: *The Bible; its Origin, its Significance, and its Abiding Worth*, page 226.
14. See Appendix A. and cf. Bennett's admirable *Primer of the Bible*.
15. J. F. McCurdy: *History, Prophecy, and the Monuments*, Vol. III., page 162.
16. For an interesting summary of the messages of the prophets see D. C. Somervell's *Short History of our Religion*, pages 27-48.
17. Peake: *The Bible*, etc., page 205.
18. Paragraphs 196, 197, and 200 of the Code.
19. The use of the Babylonian script in the Tel-el-Amarna tablets (see page 46) shows the extent to which Palestine was saturated with Babylonian civilisation two hundred years before Israel settled there.
20. Funk and Wagnall's *Bible Dictionary*: article, *Decalogue*.
21. *Philosophy of Right*, addition to Section 258.
22. C. F. Kent: *A History of the Jewish People during the Babylonian, Persian, and Greek Periods*, page 213. In *Messages of Israel's Lawgivers* Kent tabulates a valuable comparison between the Codes.
- 23, 24, 26, 27. McCurdy, op. cit., III., pages 363 (398, 377), 378, 370, 371, 372.
25. Wheeler Robinson: *Religious Ideas in the Old Testament*, pages 133 and 188. Cf. B. J. Snell's *Gain or Loss* (out of print), pages 49, 50.
28. McCurdy, op. cit., III., 415. Cf. for the Psalmists' devotion to the Law, Bewer: *Literature of the Old Testament in the Records of Civilisation Series* (Columbia University Press), pages 341, 342; and Kent: *Makers and Teachers of Judaism from the Fall of Jerusalem to the Death of Herod the Great*, page 27; and *passim*, on the general question.
29. *Old Testament Theology and Modern Ideas* (Anglican Church Handbooks), page 16.

30. *The Roots of Hebrew Prophecy and Jewish Apocalyptic* (*The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Vol. VII., No. 2, January 1923, page 23).

31. R. H. Charles : *Religious Development between the Old and New Testaments*, pages 153, 154. See also page 144 and *passim*.

32. See R. H. Charles : Warburton Lectures (1919-23) on *The Decalogue*.

33. *The Nature of Scripture*, page 39.

34. C. G. Montefiore : *The Old Testament and After*, page 4.

35. McCurdy : *History, Prophecy, and the Monuments*, Vol. I., page 15.

36. J. E. McFadyen : *The Interest of the Bible*, page 141.

37. A. S. Peake : *The Nature of Scripture*, pages 121, 122. Cf. *The Bible*, etc., page 226.

38. *Short Studies on Great Subjects : The Book of Job*, seventh and sixteenth paragraphs.

39. Charles : op. cit., pages 110, 111. The same writer's commentary on *Daniel* (Century Bible) brings out the historical references of that book.

40. Report of the 1912 Conference on *Scripture Teaching in Secondary Schools*, pages 19, 20, 23.

41. *The Bible an Outgrowth of Theocratic Life*, page 39.

42. Quoted in T. R. Glover's *The Jesus of History*, page 11.

43. *Metaphysics*, Book I., Chapter 11.; and *Poetics*, Chapter 19., Section 3. Similarly, Sir Philip Sidney in his *Apology for Poetry* says : " Poetry hath been the first light-giver to ignorance. . . . The Philosophers of Greece durst not a long time appear to the world but under the masks of Poets." Parables, he shows, are preferable to maxims, as they " more constantly inhabit both the memory and judgment." (Arber's reprint, pages 20, 21, 40, 35.)

Viscount Haldane, lecturing on *The Meaning of Truth in History* (*Conduct of Life*, pages 31-61), in a sympathetic context quotes Renan (Preface to thirteenth edition of his *Vie de Jésus*) : " There are scarcely any certain details in

history: though the details always have a meaning. The skill of the historian consists in making a true picture out of features which are only half true." Philosophy and fact, Renan holds, work together to give us true historical explanations.

44. Hastings: larger *Dictionary of the Bible*: article, *Abraham*.

45. Skinner: *International Critical Commentary*: *Genesis*, Introduction, page xxvii.

46. Vol. II., page 371.

47. G. Rawlinson: quoted by Wilbert W. White in *Reasons for the Study of the Old Testament* (International Y.M.C.A.'s booklet).

47a. Dr. Duff quotes the great Egyptologist, Breasted, who calls Amen-hetep (or as, to signalise his change of religious faith, he called himself, Akhnaton) "the first Prophet in History." His exact date is given by Weigall, late Inspector-General of Antiquities to the Egyptian Government, as 1375-1358 B.C., and Tutankhamen's as 1358-1350. There is an attractive short account of Akhnaton's reforms in Weigall's book, *Tutankhamen and Other Essays* (pages 81, 82). His faith was a remarkably tender and human monotheism. His foremost law was identical with the Mosaic commandment, namely, that no graven image either of the true God or of the older gods was to be made or worshipped. Little wonder that some trace his influence in the Mosaic religion! Almost more remarkable is it that amongst the religious hymns he composed was one which was "the undoubted original of our 104th Psalm," many of the verses being almost word for word those of the Hebrew version.

On page 47, the customary identifying of Rameses II. with the "Pharaoh of the Oppression" is mentioned. But Weigall quotes with apparent agreement the opinion that Tutankhamen (who was a full half century earlier than Rameses II., and more than a century earlier than his successor, Merenptah, usually spoken of as the "Pharaoh of the Exodus") was the Pharaoh at the time of the Exodus,

the oppression having commenced over two hundred years before.

48. W. B. Selbie : *The Nature and Message of the Bible*, page 30. (Out of print.)

49. British Museum *Guide to Babylonian and Assyrian Antiquities*, pages 226, 227.

50. How and Wells in their *Commentary on Herodotus II.*, 141, say: "The parallel to the account in 2 Kings XIX. is very marked, but the childishness of H's tradition is in strong contrast to the dignified simplicity of the Jewish one. The sudden break-off in Sennacherib's inscription (the Taylor cylinder now in the British Museum) confirms the fact of the disaster to his army."

The story of Herodotus is that a swarm of field-mice ate up the quivers and bows and shield-straps of the Assyrians; the king in the commemorative statue holding a mouse in his hand. As How and Wells show, Herodotus misses the point of the mouse being in this story, as elsewhere, a symbol of a plague. This brings his account into line with that of 2 Kings XIX. 35; with which compare the golden mice symbolical of a plague in 1 Samuel VI. 4, 5.

51. See Olmstead's *History of Assyria*, pages 78-90. Whilst "the Assyrian scribe was almost a fanatic for exact chronology, success in glossing over unpleasant facts meant promotion."

52. McCurdy : op. cit., Vol. III., pages 313-316.

53. Op. cit., pages 93-98.

54. Bishop Temple in *The Modern Teacher* (ed. A. W. Bain), page 262.

55. L. E. Bennett, Master of King's College, University of Queensland, in a book entitled *The Realm of God*. Quoted from *Public Opinion* for November 16, 1923.

56. Theodore H. Robinson : *Prophecy and the Prophets*, page 47.

57. *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, page 243.

58. *The Education of Christ*, page 85.

59. *Life of Jesus*, Chapter v. The quotation at the end of Chapter VII. is from the last paragraph of Renan's first chapter.

60. Introduction to the Tauchnitz edition of the *New Testament*, page xvi.

61. Burkitt: *The Gospel and its Transmission*, pages 6 and 8.

62. *St. Luke the Physician*, page 158.

63. Burkitt: *Earliest Sources*, etc., pages 97 and 129.

64. Op. cit. (note 62), page 160.

65. In a recent letter to the writer.

The *Hibbert Journal* for October 1921 (Vol. XX.) contained a suggestion by Canon H. B. Streeter which is noteworthy, although it runs counter to such statements as that of Professor Bacon—"Mark, in our day universally admitted to constitute the main narrative substratum of each of the other synoptics" (*Jesus or Christ? The Hibbert Journal Supplement*, 1909, page 211)—and of Professor Burkitt: "On grounds mainly of literary criticism it is acknowledged that *St. Mark* was used as a basis by the other synoptists" (*Sources*, etc., page 47). The suggestion has to do with the very considerable sections of *St. Luke* which are not traceable to either *St. Mark* or *Q*. Streeter's view is that these sections are a groundwork rather than interpolations; and that taken together they may even represent a complete Gospel; and that this Gospel, not *St. Mark*, was the original framework of *St. Luke*, into which extracts from *St. Mark* were inserted. *St. Mark*, in this view, is used differently in *St. Matthew* and in *St. Luke*. For the first Gospel, *St. Mark* does provide the framework; but non-Markan sections are the groundwork of *St. Luke*. Streeter thinks that this original of the third Gospel may have been written by *St. Luke* himself, being based partly on an early form of *Q*, which *St. Luke* had before him, but chiefly on traditions (some of which may have been written) which *St. Luke* had collected. Streeter still believes that both *St. Mark* and *Q* are sources for both the first and the third

Gospels ; but that this earlier Lukan Gospel is more truly the source of our *St. Luke* than *St. Mark* is. The author of the suggestion admits, however, the difficulty of disentangling the original *St. Luke*. (For a further reference to this see Appendix D, Note B.)

66. *Against Heresies*, Book III., Section 1.

67. Quoted by Godet in *Studies on the New Testament*, page 8. Godet dates St. Matthew's writing between A.D. 60 and 63. He, with some others, thinks that the Apostles left Jerusalem about A.D. 60. Godet notes that in A.D. 59 St. Paul seems only to have found there James the brother of Jesus, who was not an apostle, and the council of elders. Though this has all the appearance of an official welcome, these alone are named. The Apostles' absence from Jerusalem would harmonise with the idea of Rome as a new centre of propaganda, put forward on pages 89-91.

68. *Op. cit.*, pages 18-30.

69. Burkitt : *The Gospel and its Transmission*, page 64, and *Earliest Sources*, etc., pages 34, 35.

70. W. H. Bennett : *The Life of Christ according to St. Mark*, page 1.

71. On these "minor inaccuracies" see *Earliest Sources*, etc., pages 85-89 ; and *J.T.S.* for April 1916.

Although the date of the Crucifixion is still somewhat in debate, the common tendency is to assign it to the 14th of the month, the day before the Passover. [On "day" see Note on page 84.] St. Mark is therefore usually regarded as mistaken when he identifies the Last Supper with the Passover meal. In agreement with B. W. Bacon, Burkitt thinks a freer attitude towards commemorative feast-days had sprung up in the western church for which St. Mark chiefly wrote ; and St. Mark may have been following in the wake of an accepted identification amongst his readers.

But it is further open to us to ask whether from the first the Last Supper and the Passover may not have been identified *in spirit* ? Christ answers quite seriously the

disciples' question : "Where wilt Thou that we go and make ready that Thou mayest eat the passover?" And St. Luke quotes His appealing words : "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." May not the Last Supper actually and fitly have stood to Christ and His disciples for *their* Passover meal that year? To Him : as (accepting St. John's date) He was to be Himself sacrificed before the true Passover meal on the morrow ; to them : as they could not well with broken hearts pass straightway from the Crucifixion scene to a commemorative feast. There could be no risk of misunderstanding concerning the day on the disciples' part. But in interpreting the Last Supper as His and their Passover, there may have been an intentional foregleam cast by Christ upon the impending tragedy of the morrow.

Budden and Hastings in their recent work *Local Colour of the Bible* (Vol. I., page 80) comment on the fact that the Hebrew Passover itself was apparently a recognised festival of the nomadic period before the time of the Exodus, and was taken over and adapted to the commemoration of the deliverance from Egypt. "In dealing with His chosen people God did not invent a new rite or ceremonial at every stage of His progressive revelation to them ; but He took a rite with which they were already familiar and gave to it a new and deeper significance in its new use and relations." May not Christ have done the same, without implying a strict identity of dates?

In *The Journal of Theological Studies* for April 1916, in the course of a further study of the matter, Burkitt puts forward reasons, not identical with the above, why St. Mark might think of the Last Supper as a Paschal meal. An interesting detail, which he brings out, is the likelihood of the meal having been eaten in the very house where John Mark lived : "the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark" (Acts XII. 12).

72. Burkitt : *Earliest Sources*, etc., pages 85-87, 93, 94.

73. *Oxford Studies*, page 219. On the Palestinian char-

acter of Q, see Streeter's essay, pages 209-217; Archdeacon Allen's chapters in the same volume on *The Book of Sayings used by the Editor of the First Gospel* (pages 274 and 277) and on *The Aramaic Background of the Gospels* (page 304); also Bacon's article on *The Nature and Design of Q, the Second Synoptic Source* (*Hibbert Journal*, July 1924, page 674).

74. *Life of Jesus*, Part II., Chapter VI., Section 76.

75. *St. Luke the Physician*, pages 81-92.

76 and 77. In a lecture on *The Inspiration of the New Testament*, delivered nearly twenty years ago, the late Professor James Hope Moulton referred to this difficulty concerning Quirinius; but he added the cautious proviso "be it proved a mistake" (see page 113). Scholarship thrives by being sceptical of difficulties. It is often found that the difficulty helps the proof. With similar caution Deissmann had said in his book, *Light from the Ancient East*, "No tablets have yet been found to enable us to date exactly the years of office of the Procurators, Felix and Festus, or of the Proconsul Gallio, which would settle an important problem of early Christian history." Later in *St. Paul: A Study*, etc. (Appendix I., pages 235-239), Deissmann quotes these earlier words, and tells of an inscription on a stone found at Delphi which shows that Gallio entered on his proconsulship in A.D. 52.

78. A. Deissmann: *The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul*, pages 15-23.

May it not be partly for the reason that Christ is so vastly beyond our powers of conceiving that there is still so marked a tendency to think of Him in terms of mild quiescence rather than in terms of His real strength? "A picture of Jesus emerges," says Deissmann, "which, to one who knows the tradition, is recognised to be unhistorical." It seems astounding that any one should need to say: "The more we read the words of Jesus with a desire to understand His personality, the more we come upon weightily earnest words of powerful manliness"; and

that " words of Jesus spring forth which can only be called heroic." These descriptions belong to all the words and deeds of Christ. His gentleness is the final and perfect expression of His strength.

How has the misconception arisen ? Part of the explanation must surely be found in our insensitiveness to the heroism of the spirit. Moses was misunderstood. St. Paul, tamed from his breathing forth of threatenings and slaughter, became, as an Apostle, mild and forbearing. His mildness was smothered fire. Yet, as the Second Epistle to the Corinthians shows (x. 1, 10), he also was misunderstood. Accordingly, the moment that we read of Christ, " He shall not strive, nor cry ; a bruised reed shall He not break " (St. Matthew xii. 19, 20), we know that we are reading of one whose spiritual strength, almost in proportion to its perfectness, will be in danger of being misjudged. It must not be put down wholly to our insensitiveness, however. The reality itself is so much beyond our powers of thought that all that we can ever get are gleamings of meaning, suggestions enwrapped in wonder.

Tracing thus the poverty of our conception to its sources, is there any remedy ? In keeping with the subject of these chapters, there is one sovereign remedy ; and that is the Bible itself. The Bible is robust and bracing enough. " It is a man's book. It blows the mind clear." The Gospel stories give us glimpses of Christ as He actually lived. And there we see the Ideal Manhood. (See references to St. Mark's portraiture, pages 6, 77-81.)

79. B. W. Bacon : *Jesus and Paul*, page 222.

80. *The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate*, page 439.

81. *St. Paul : A Study in Social and Religious History*, page 8.

82. The passages referred to have perplexed many. They occur in Christ's conversations with the Jews in chapters v. to viii. It is hardly possible to read parts of these chapters, without realising what must have been the

bewilderment of the Jews, had they actually listened to these discourses. (See Burkitt's strong comments in *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, pages 227, 228.) It is helpful to think that, though they may contain traces of remembered points in Christ's teaching (or of St. John's philosophising, expressed in dialogue, on the uniqueness of Christ's nature), these chapters have probably been written over by the hand of an editor living in the thick of controversy. The attitudes and utterances of this section of the Gospel do not, however, affect the massive appeal and beauty of the Gospel as a whole.

83. Sir W. M. Ramsay: *Luke the Physician*, pages 9 and 10.

83a. J. S. Mackenzie, in an article in *Mind*; new series, Vol. III.; Herbert Spencer, in "Corrections and Additions," prefixed to the second edition of his *Principles of Psychology*.

84. *St. Paul, A Study*, etc., page 3.

85. *Outspoken Essays*: First series, page 229.

86. *Was Christ born at Bethlehem?* page 39.

87. *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, pages 83 and 85.

88. *Belief in God*; page 96.

89. *The Bearing*, etc., pages 88, 89.

90. *Contents and Origin of the Acts of the Apostles critically investigated*: English translation, Vol. II., pages 196 and 200.

91. Gore: *op. cit.*, pages 194, 195; and Rackham: *Acts of the Apostles*, Introduction, pages l. to lv.

92. *Le Livre des Actes*, page 129.

Recent French criticism of the *Acts* is of too great importance to be omitted. Loisy (*Les Actes des Apôtres*, 1920), by showing in detail how other travelling companions of St. Paul (Silas, Titus, Timothy) cannot be intended by the "we" of the travel-sections, joins with the majority of critics, including even those who have disputed the authenticity of the *Acts* as a whole, in assigning

those sections to St. Luke (page 18). They (page 41) are the "fundamental document" of the *Acts*. Loisy holds that the main problem for criticism is to free the work of St. Luke himself from the additions and alterations which have disfigured it. His view is that the original *Acts* was St. Luke's, and had a definite historical plan. This *Acts* was of high historical value. It was written to show the origin of the early church, and to tell the story of the missionary labours of St. Paul. But the present *Acts* is without any clear plan, its editor having superimposed an aim of his own. Loisy's conclusion is that the "I" of the introductory passages of the third Gospel and of the *Acts* is one and the same as he who writes "we" in the travel-sections of the latter book; but that he, *i.e.*, St. Luke, "probably the wisest and most enlightened" of the New Testament writers, has had his work grievously maltreated by later editing (pages 26 and 89). A chief result of Loisy's searching study, extending to nearly a thousand closely-printed pages, is that he is able to say (*Introduction*, page 90) that so far as one can judge from what is left of his work, St. Luke was "a man of cultivated mind, of considerable literary gifts, and above all conscientious."

Still more recently, Professor Goguel of Paris (*Le Livre des Actes*, 1922), concludes that behind the *Acts* there is the narrative of a direct witness (page 343), probably St. Luke; but the book has been re-handled: and it is from this fact that all criticism should start. He admits the contention of Zeller, Harnack, and many others that the style and language of the Gospel and the *Acts* is that of the travel-sections of the *Acts*. Goguel differs from Loisy in thinking that the editorial alterations scarcely bear Loisy's description of a superimposed plan or aim; but that they are often merely literary changes, either to shorten the narrative by cutting out what was not essential, or to add touches to it. Goguel's conclusion is that when writing of the things he saw St. Luke is precise and reliable, but that the portions for which he depended on others we cannot

accept with the same confidence. The tendency of Goguel's criticism is to make the foundation of the whole work St. Luke's: re-handled by a later editor, in whom, however, he does not find the traces of definite plan that Loisy had sought to show. (For a brief review of the position, and especially of Goguel's contribution to the problem, see the editorial in *The Interpreter* for January, 1924.)

93. *Was Christ born*, etc., pages 51-81. See also the same writer's *Bearing of Recent Discovery*, etc., Chapters XIX., XX., and XXI. The actual enrolment would have begun in 8 or 7 B.C., and may have run on into the next year.

94. Dean Bernard of Trinity College, Dublin: *St. Margaret's Lectures* for 1902, pages 211-217.

95. *Was Christ born at Bethlehem?* page 22.

96. Deissmann: *The Religion of Jesus* etc., page 23.

97. *Critical Introduction to the New Testament*, page 47.

98. *Paul: his Life and Works*: Part II.; Introduction, and chapters I., II., and III.

99. If the unsurpassed intrinsic worth and potency of Scripture has been truly suggested in the foregoing pages, and, at the same time, the inevitable presence of certain difficulties to the present-day reader (especially in the West), does it not follow, that we ought in every way to make the approach as easy as possible? No other book would be brought out, edition after edition, containing known errors. Why should difficulties, such as that of Isaiah IX. 3 (page 5), or the marginal 4004 B.C., or the ascription of authorship at the head of the Epistle to the Hebrews (page 122), be gratuitously perpetuated in connection with a literature which, beyond all question, is humanity's most sacred trust?

A BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY

For titles of books specially suited to the general reader see Notes 9, 13, 14, 22, 29, 31, 33, 36, 42, 57, 61, 79, 88, 97.

In addition to the books referred to by Dr. (Bishop)

Charles Gore, Principal Sir G. Adam Smith, Sir W. M. Ramsay, Archdeacon Charles, Professors B. W. Bacon, Bennett, Burkitt, Deissman, J. E. McFadyen and Peake (notably Peake's *Commentary*), Dr. T. R. Glover, Canon Robinson, D. C. Somervell and others ; teachers would find direct help from the Report of the 1912 Conference on *Scripture Teaching in Secondary Schools* (C.U.P.) ; any of Miss Hetty Lee's books of lessons on Biblical subjects and Miss Rowton's *Making of the Bible* (National Society) ; any of the *Teachers and Taught* series of Lesson Handbooks ; the *Humanism in the Bible* series (Clarke) ; any recent books on the Bible by the Student Christian Movement ; Hunter's *New Testament Writers* and Healing's *Old Testament Writers* (J. W. Butcher). And, for use with their scholars, *The Bible for Children* and *Young People's Bible* (illustrated, and with maps : Pilgrim Press), and *The Bible for Youth* (with maps : T. C. & E. C. Jack). With regard to the three books of selections last named, parents and teachers will find *The Bible for Children* specially suitable for children under ten or eleven years of age ; *The Young People's Bible*, for boys and girls of from ten or eleven to thirteen or fourteen ; *The Bible for Youth* (as its editors intend) for readers over thirteen or fourteen. Judging from the writer's experience in lecturing to teachers (including Sunday School teachers) and others, there are many who wish to introduce the Bible to young people in their 'teens in the light of modern knowledge. They will find the way prepared for them in the carefully planned, and often eloquently written, notes of the editors in *The Bible for Youth*.

SHORT TOPICAL INDEX

(References to the books of the Bible, and to other literary and historical matters, will be found in the chronologies.)

ABRAHAM, 44-46

Acts, earlier chapters, 107-112

— later chapters, 101-107

Apocalyptic literature, 23-24

Assyrian and Babylonian influences, 14, 15, 21

Assyrian chronicles, 50-52, 55

Authenticity of Epistles, 121-124

BALAAM, 12, 29

Bible and progress, the, 3, 60-1

Bible, the English, containing both problems and solutions, 28, 35, 65

CREATION stories, 4, 10

Criticism, constructive, 1, 2, 42

— extreme, 1, 42

DAVID, 12, 29, 49

Deuteronomist School, 53-54

Devotional value of Scripture, 1, 8, 38-39

ERRORS known, why perpetuated? 122, 159

Exile, the, 20-22, 55-56

FLOOD, the, 10-12

God's hand in history, 49, 57

Gospels, how related to each other, 6, 67-71, 85, 93, 152

HAMMURABI'S Code, 14-15

Herodotus, a story from, 52

Hezekiah's tribute, 51-52

History, actual, 27, 40, 42

— phases of, 41, 57-60, 149

IMPRECATORY Psalms, 25-26

Inspiration, 7, 25, 59, 88, 124

Interpretation, keynotes of Old Testament, 58

Interpreter, the Bible its own, 28, 35, 65

JOSEPH, story of, 46-47

Josiah, 18, 53

LAW, codes of the, 14-26

— New Testament, 24

— progressiveness of the, 14-24

MIRACLES, records of, 96-99, 115-117

Moses, 16, 17, 47-49

NATIVITY, stories of the, 71, 113

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>New interpretations not diminishing old values, ix. 39</p> <p>New Testament and Old (see Testaments)</p>
<p>PAUL, St., 100-105, 117, 121-126</p> <p>Permanence of the Law, 25-26</p> <p>— of the Bible, 1-4, 39, 60-61</p> <p>Plagues, 47</p> <p>Politics and the Bible, 57-60</p> <p>Popular book, the Bible a, 38</p> <p>Portraits of Christ, 81, 95</p> <p>Prophecy and history, 54, 59</p> <p>Prophetic histories, 28, 41, 54, 57-61, 128</p> | <p>RED SEA crossing, 48</p> <p>Reduplicated stories, 11, 128</p> <p>Rome as centre of literary propaganda, 89-91, 145-146</p>
<p>SAYINGS of Christ, 83-87, 136-138</p> <p>Science and the Bible, 2-4, 38</p>
<p>TESTAMENTS, between the, 23</p> <p>— compared, 63-64</p> <p>— the two, one Bible, 26, 62</p> <p>— texts of, 64-66</p> <p>Truth, historical, 41, 149</p>
<p>VALUES, old, not diminished by new interpretations, 39</p> |
|---|--|

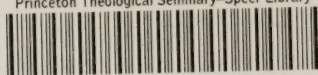
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